

Afghan ex-king to return home

ISLAMABAD (R) — Afghanistan's exiled former king, Zahir Shah, plans to return to his war-devastated country, according to an envoy of his visiting Pakistan. The envoy, General Abdul Wali, the ex-king's son-in-law, whose visit has soured ties between Islamabad and Kabul, was also quoted in a newspaper interview published on Tuesday as calling for a traditional grand assembly to settle the Afghan crisis. "King Zahir Shah will return and will pass through Pakistan on his way to Afghanistan," the Dawn newspaper quoted Gen. Wali as saying. The red-carpet welcome extended to Gen. Wali in Pakistan since his arrival last Thursday has provoked a strong protest from President Burhanuddin Rabbani's government in Kabul, which says he should not have been invited without consulting Kabul. Islamabad has rejected the protest, saying it has no favourites among the squabbling Afghan faction leaders, who along with more than three million refugees, had made Pakistan their home during their 14-year guerrilla war against a Soviet-backed government in Kabul.

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Israelis plan to launch Dead Sea ferry

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A Jewish entrepreneur is planning to launch a daily ferry service linking Israel and Jordan over the Dead Sea this year. A 40-tonne vessel is now undergoing renovations at Jaffa port awaiting the political go-ahead from Jordan, owner Motta Gonen told AFP. "It looks like we should get permission. Both sides are interested in the scheme," he said. It would be one of the first private projects between the two neighbours to come to fruition since they signed peace and opened their borders last October. Mr. Gonen has two Israeli partners as well as a Jordanian businessman involved in the project. The ship, called 'Tot's Wife', would take a maximum of 110 passengers from kibbutz Ein Gedi in Israel to the Ma'in hot springs in Jordan. Mr. Gonen is well aware not only of the political problems, but also the difficulties of sailing on the lake. He has operated the only vessel on the Dead Sea for the last 15 years, a marine research ship. It is the lowest spot on earth at more than 400 metres below sea level and temperatures soar above 40C during the summer. The salt concentration is about 30 per cent compared to four per cent for normal sea water. There is no marine life and it is impossible for swimmers to sink.

Israel, PLO set July 25 for full accord

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on Tuesday set a July 25 deadline for a full agreement to extend Palestinian autonomy across the West Bank.

Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo announced that they had reached an "understanding" on an outline of the second phase of autonomy: Transfer of civilian powers and army redeployment from Palestinian areas followed by elections.

"An understanding has been reached on main aspects of the interim agreement," Mr. Abed Rabbo told reporters.

However, the outline he provided was a reshuffle of the 1993 declaration of principles for self-rule without dates or clear indications of which areas would be evacuated by the Israeli army.

"Arafat and Peres instructed their delegations ... to enter into intense negotiations in order to finalise the interim agreement by July 25," Mr. Abed Rabbo said.

After nearly three hours of talks Mr. Arafat said: "I hope the signing of the agreement will take place on July 25. I hope the prisoners will be freed as soon as possible."

Mr. Abed Rabbo said they had agreed that the interim accord would include a gradual release of Palestinian prisoners. But an Israeli ministerial committee would take

the decisions, he admitted.

About two-thirds of the estimated 6,500 prisoners have been on hunger-strike demanding their immediate release.

Mr. Peres gave a hint of some substance.

"We have agreed that in the major Arab cities and in most of the Arab villages there will not be any Israeli installations, neither police, nor military."

He said there would be "special arrangements" for control of the roads, "again we have agreed in principle, but we have to write it down."

But he gave no dates, which Mr. Arafat had previously insisted on.

"I think we reached an agreement on most of the issues," Mr. Peres said. "There is still a great deal of work to be done. Some of them we reached orally."

"The two delegations will start to put everything in writing and in order. We should make a supreme effort to conclude everything in writing before the end of this month, namely on July 25."

"We have made an important step forward and we should continue to work as seriously" to conclude an agreement.

The next phase of autonomy, after the Gaza Strip and West Bank enclave of Jericho, which Israel pulled out of in May 1994, is already



British Prime Minister John Major and his wife Norma outside 10 Downing Street after Tuesday's Conservative Party election which Mr. Major won (Reuters photo)

Major wins party elections, reshuffles cabinet today

LONDON (Agencies) — British Prime Minister John Major said on Tuesday he would stay in office until the next election after a "very clear-cut" victory over ex-cabinet minister John Redwood in a ballot for leadership of the Conservative Party.

Mr. Major told reporters he was putting the finishing touches to a reshuffle of his cabinet which he would announce on Wednesday.

"It was a very clear-cut decision. The election is now over," Mr. Major said. "It was a clear-cut choice and we have made that choice. The matter is now concluded."

"I shall now return to

Downing Street and will start this evening to reconstruct the government." He said he expected to announce the new cabinet line-up on Wednesday.

"I believe that has put to rest any question and any speculation about the leadership of the Conservative Party up to and beyond the next general election," Mr. Major said. The next election is due by mid-1997.

Mr. Major announced the leadership ballot on June 22 after months of sniping from right-wing opponents who accused him of weak leadership.

He won 218 votes from the 329 Conservative legislators

in the contest for the leadership of the party, compared with 89 votes for John Redwood, the former Welsh secretary.

Eight Conservatives in the House of Commons abstained and 12 spoiled their ballot papers in an attempt to deny Mr. Major outright victory and force a second-ballot with new contenders.

However, Mr. Major handily exceeded the 50-vote margin he needed over Mr. Redwood party rules.

"The message I would give to every Conservative ... is that the time for division is over," Mr. Major said outside his office in Downing St.

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Peace means using resources for non-military means — King

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein said Tuesday that channelling of resources for non-military purposes could be achieved through the establishment of peace, noting that a just and comprehensive peace can put the entire region at the threshold of a new era.

In an address to the annual Arab conference on management held at Bradford University and read out on his behalf by His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mobammad, the King's military secretary, the King said the demographic facts in the Middle East make it incumbent on all concerned not to disregard the great population growth in the region.

The King focused on labour and education and the need for a comprehensive



Prince Talal Ben Mobammad

sive development of the infrastructure.

The World Bank has estimated that in 15 years' time the population of Israel will have ensured an income as high as the gross income of the entire Arab region, he said. Against such a disparity in income, the sustainability

of peace, is questioned, he said. It also undermines human development and the peace building process, he added.

King Hussein said it is through global and regional commitment that the Middle East region can be rebuilt. The King highlighted the importance of the Middle East and North Africa's economic summit which will be held in Amman in October in efforts to rebuild the Middle East.

The King noted the importance of administrative development plays a crucial role in achieving that end, whether in terms of protection of environment or investment or strategic planning or marketing.

At the conference, Prince Talal received an honorary doctorate awarded to the King by the university.

Kabariti, de Charette discuss ties, peace and Iraq situation

PARIS (Petra) — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti on Tuesday met in Paris with his French counterpart Harve de Charette.

In statements to the press following the meeting, Mr. Kabariti said Jordan was interested in establishing a Jordanian-French dialogue which will include politics, economy, culture and security and to crown this dialogue with signing a partnership deal with the European Union.

The minister, who is accompanying His Majesty

King Hussein on a visit to France, said an official Jordanian economic delegation will soon visit France to discuss Jordanian debts to Paris in detail.

Mr. Kabariti said his talks with the French minister dealt with the Middle East and North Africa economic summit which will be held in Amman and a conference of the Mediterranean countries which will be held in Barcelona later this year. The two events will be major points in launching cooperation among the countries of the Middle

East and Mediterranean region, he said.

Mr. Kabariti said his talks also dealt with situation in the Middle East, including the situation in Iraq. "I was acquainted with the French position and I outlined the Jordanian view on the way to tackle the present situation and the need to ease the plight of the Iraqi people within the context of international legitimacy," said Mr. Kabariti, who added that the Jordanian and French positions on the Iraqi problem were very similar.

Cabinet extends exemption from customs duties for newsprint

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government on Tuesday decided to grant customs exemption for limited quantities of newsprint for the rest of this year, after granting a similar exemption in the first half of this year.

Total exemption for newsprint from customs duties is a long-standing demand of the Jordanian press, which is struggling under a more than 120-per cent increase in the international prices of newsprint.

The decision, which averts a planned increase in the newsprint prices of all Jordanian dailies, was announced after a Council of Ministers meeting chaired by acting Prime Minister Abdul Raouf

Rawabdeh.

The announcement, carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the newsprint imports of the establishments which print the Arabic-language dailies Al Ra'i, Al Dstour and Al Aswaa were exempted from customs duties. Al Ra'i could import 3,300 tonnes, Al Dstour 2,200 and Al Aswaa 800 tonnes, the decision said.

It said the three establishments in turn have to reflect the exemption on the printing of other publications in their presses. These include political parties' newspapers and other weeklies and magazines.

The publishing houses have been lobbying the government for a total exemption from customs duties for newsprint, pointing out that newsprint prices had gone up

from about \$450 per tonne to \$1,100 since May 1994.

The government, which levies a 25 per cent customs duty on newsprint, initially offered a reduction of 50 per cent, but the newspaper establishment said it was not enough to balance the price increase.

With the latest decision, the prices of the dailies will remain the same — 150 fils each — while an increase in advertisement costs which went into effect three months ago will remain unchanged.

In its session on Tuesday, the Council of Ministers approved a memorandum of mutual understanding between the Royal Jordanian and the British Airways to increase the number of flights between London and Amman to eight every week.

Syria must curb Hizbollah for peace agreement — Israel

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — An Israeli cabinet minister said on Tuesday Syria must prevent deadly Hizbollah guerrilla attacks on Israeli troops in South Lebanon if Damascus wants to remove obstacles to a peace treaty with the Jewish state.

Hizbollah guerrillas Tuesday killed a pro-Israeli militiaman in a roadside bomb ambush in South Lebanon after a Lebanese girl was injured in Israeli shelling, security sources said.

They said Hizbollah guerrillas detonated the bomb near a patrol of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia in the village of Arab Salim in the Israeli-occupied border enclave in the south.

The militiaman died of wounds shortly after he arrived in a hospital in the town of Marjayoun, inside the enclave Israel calls a "security zone," said the sources.

The ambush triggered Israeli and SLA artillery and tank bombardment of sus-

pected guerrilla hideouts around the village of Kfar Rumman, but no casualties were reported, the sources said.

Earlier Tuesday, a 12-year-old Lebanese girl was wounded when Israeli gunners shelled Hizbollah strongholds two kilometres north of the zone, the sources said.

On Monday, two Israeli soldiers were killed and five wounded in two separate guerrilla attacks, which were claimed by Hizbollah.

In a direct warning to Hizbollah, Israel's army chief said that even one more guerrilla operation could cause Israel to attack Lebanese villages, despite U.S. and Syrian-mediated understandings which have limited fighting in civilian areas since 1993.

"Between us and the (Syrians) there exists a sea and an abyss of mistrust," said Health Minister Efraim Sneh.

"If they ever want to

bridge over this, the way they can do this is to stop the operations of the Hizbollah. If they don't do this, the abyss of mistrust will stay at its current width, and it will be very difficult to reach an agreement."

Syria, accusing Israel of stepping up tension in South Lebanon, said on Tuesday Damascus would not ask Lebanese resistance fighters to lay down their arms.

Army Chief of Staff Amnon Shahak said if Hizbollah continued to use villages to launch attacks on soldiers and Katyusha rocket barrages against northern Israel, the hamlets could become targets of Israeli assaults.

"I am afraid that if Hizbollah continues even one more time, a very different reality will be forced on the residents of the south," he told reporters.

Syria's official daily newspaper Tishreen accused Israel of worsening tensions.

Boutaleb arrives with message

AMMAN (Petra) — Abdul Hadi Boutaleb, an advisor to King Hassan II of Morocco and a member of the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilisation Research, arrived in Amman Tuesday on a several-day visit to Jordan during which he will deliver to His Majesty King Hussein a message from the Moroccan monarch. Mr. Boutaleb, who will also take part in the 10th conference of the academy which will open Wednesday, said the message deals with Jordanian-Moroccan cooperation and coordination on various issues.

IAEA team to visit Iraq

VIENNA (AFP) — An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team headed by professor Maurizio Zaffereo, in charge of the Iraq section at the IAEA, is scheduled to arrive Wednesday in Baghdad. The team will hold talks on nuclear issues with senior Iraqi officials but will not carry out any inspections, a source close to the agency said.

Algerian energy workers end strike

PARIS (R) — Algerian oil and gas workers have returned to work after a 10-day strike launched to press the government to restructure the energy sector, their union's spokesman told Algerian state-run radio on Tuesday.

Eva Gabor dies

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Actress Eva Gabor, best known for her role as an out-of-place city socialite stuck on a farm on television's "Green Acres," died Tuesday. She was 74. Gabor died at 10:05 a.m. at Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre from respiratory distress and other infections, hospital spokesman Ron Wise said. She entered the hospital on June 21 after falling and breaking her hip, Mr. Wise said.

Gamaa claims attack on Mubarak; Sudan wants Halaib in World Court

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egypt's leading militant group on Tuesday said it had carried out last week's assassination attempt against President Hosni Mubarak and vowed to try again.

Mr. Mubarak, who escaped unhurt, has accused Sudan's Islamic government of masterminding the gun attack on his motorcade as he arrived in Addis Ababa on June 26 for an Organisation of African Unity summit.

However, the Gamaa Islamiya (Islamic Group), which has been waging a violent three-year anti-government campaign in which more than 800 people have died, said it was "responsible for the attempt to assassinate this tyrant."

Mr. Mubarak has waged a relentless war against militants who want to turn Egypt, the most populous Arab country, into an Iranian-style fundamentalist state.

The Gamaa boasted the death bid still "proves it can strike painful blows against the enemies of God no matter how long it takes" and vowed "attempts to execute God's punishment on this criminal will not cease, God willing."

In a statement, the Gamaa said Mr. Mubarak had taken "the same path in betraying Islam" as his predecessor Anwar Al Sadat, who was assassinated by extremists in 1981.

"He has violated the honour and spilled the pure blood of Muslim youth. He has imprisoned the aged, women and children. He has tortured young and old," the statement said.

Cairo has been claiming virtual victory since March over the Gamaa after much of its domestic leadership, breaking up a major new cell and continuing its attacks to a few towns in

south Egypt.

The group trumpeted that the attack forced Mr. Mubarak "to return panic-stricken to Egypt where he began to babble expressions that showed how he lost his nerve."

A week-long media campaign in Egypt pumped up Mr. Mubarak's popularity by presenting him as the victim of a foreign plot and depicting Khartoum as a den of terrorism seeking to destabilise Egypt by supporting militants.

Egyptian Information Minister Safwat Al Sherif, who has repeated Cairo's suspicions that Sudan's government was the real power behind the attack, said the identity of the gunmen was a secondary issue.

"Who planned this conspiracy, and who trained these elements?" he said when asked by reporters about an Ethiopian announce-

ment that five gunmen in the shooting were Egyptian.

The Gamaa, which said the Addis Ababa attack was its third attempt to kill Mr. Mubarak, said its efforts "to fulfill the law of God against this criminal will not be halted."

It called on the army and security forces "and all those who participate with this dictator and his oppressive measures against Islam and Muslims, to repent in front of God and to declare their innocence from all these cursed practices carried out by this dictator."

Sudan on Tuesday renewed its demand to take its long-running dispute with Egypt over the desert border triangle of Halaib to international arbitration.

Ghazi Salahuddin Atabani, minister of state in the Foreign Ministry, told a news

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U.N.-Serb tension escalates

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Tensions escalated between U.N. forces and Bosnian Serbs on the Mount Igman road, the lifeline to Sarajevo, where shelling continued on Tuesday as the Red Cross began distributing the last of its aid.

In a desperate bid to bring humanitarian supplies into besieged Sarajevo, the U.N. has begun dangerous night missions along the treacherous Mount Igman route which is regularly attacked by the Bosnian Serbs.

Sarajevo came under bombardment Tuesday with periodic shelling of the city centre beginning at midday. Several shells landed within 100 metres of the headquarters of the commander of U.N. forces in Bosnia. On Sunday one mortar exploded in the U.N. compound injuring a total of six people.

Many shells were also exchanged between Bosnian army gunners in the west of Sarajevo and Bosnian Serb

forces Tuesday afternoon. Three mortar bombs landed close to another U.N. base which was hit five days ago.

"It was tense in this area for about four hours," U.N. spokesman Major Guy Vinet reported from the base itself.

The Serbian state Tanjug news agency in Belgrade, quoting Bosnian Serb military sources, said two people including a young girl were killed in a Serb-held Sarajevo suburb on Tuesday during an exchange of fire.

On Monday evening Bosnian Serb gunners unleashed a volley of cannon rounds at a U.N. humanitarian convoy bringing 70 tonnes of flour down the steep mountain track just outside Sarajevo.

Peacekeepers responded with a single heavy mortar bomb and two light tank rounds. Four smoke mortar shells were also fired to mask the peacekeepers' final descent once the convoy was ready to move again, a U.N. spokesman said.

Serb gunners apparently used night-vision goggles to target the U.N. vehicles in the dark, U.N. drivers also use night-vision and descend the mountain without headlights.

With Sarajevo's airport closed by Serb threat since April, and food shortages looming, U.N. officials had decided to expand their week-old military resupply effort over Igman to include U.N. humanitarian aid.

U.N. peacekeepers transported 62 tonnes of flour for Sarajevo residents on Saturday night. Monday night's convoy, driven by French and Danish peacekeepers, was the second such aid convoy.

Ron Redmond, spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva, condemned the Serb attack.

"It's absolutely outrageous that they are attacking a convoy bound for a besieged city and the innocent civilians in

that city," Mr. Redmond said. "As far as we're concerned this current situation is about as bleak as we have seen in Sarajevo as far as no prospects for a solution in sight."

Only eight per cent of the 6,000 tonne monthly food goal for Sarajevo had been met for June, he added. "When you only get eight per cent of what's required into the city in a given month, people are going to really start feeling the effects of this — malnutrition, disease, other illnesses," Mr. Redmond said.

The Serbs warned the United Nations on Monday that any further aid convoys on the Igman road would be attacked.

Three times earlier Monday, rebel Serbs had also attacked U.N. vehicles on the Igman road, prompting peacekeepers to fire the 120-mm mortar that France dis-

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Iraq turns to former Soviet bloc friends

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq is increasingly turning to its traditional allies in the former Soviet bloc to build support for lifting the five-year-old U.N. economic embargo.

"The contacts between Iraq, Russia, China, Bulgaria, Cuba and Vietnam mark the start of the success of our campaign aimed at breaking the embargo," the ruling Baath Party daily Al Thawra said.

Baghdad is seeking pledges for business contracts hoping they will step up pressure for an end to the sanctions imposed by the U.N. Security Council after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

When a Russian delegation returned to Sofia last week from a visit to Baghdad, Deputy Prime Minister Kiril Tsochev said Iraq had agreed to reimburse its \$1.512 billion debt to Bulgaria with shipments of oil.

Economic cooperation accords worth around \$700 million were also signed with Iraq, although the embargo has to be lifted for them to take effect. Mr. Tsochev added.

Iraq, whose ruling Baath Party was founded on the socialist model, had privileged economic relations with the former Soviet bloc and must pay back considerable debts.

Russia, a permanent U.N. Security Council member seeking an easing of sanctions, signed a preliminary accord with Baghdad last month to develop oil fields, which have a capacity of one million barrels of crude per day.

But the Russian company Rukoil can only start developing the Mishrif, Yamama and Rumailah fields in southern Iraq once the embargo is lifted.

Iraq, which has reached similar agreement with French firms Total and Elf-Aquitaine, hopes to see these companies "influence decision-makers in their countries" to lift the sanctions, former Oil Minister Safaa Hadi Jawad said.

Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan visited Beijing and Hanoi last month partly to explore developing economic ties.

Like Russia, China is also a permanent Security Council member and supports an easing of the embargo, while Vietnam backs an immediate lifting of the sanctions.

"We support Iraq in its efforts to lift the embargo," Vietnam's ambassador to Baghdad Nguyen Quang Khai told AFP. "Iraq was, and will remain an important economic partner."

An Iraqi official said: "Lifting the embargo is only a question of time, which explains why several countries want to strengthen their ties with Iraq."

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Kuwait to probe 'arms graft'

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's government will ask state prosecutors to look into parliamentary allegations of waste and corruption in arms purchases, newspapers reported on Tuesday.

The cabinet took the decision, which could lead to legal action, in response to a parliamentary report that said civil and military officials had lost tens of millions of dollars through ineptitude and possible graft.

Al Watan newspaper and the English-language Arab Times and Kuwait Times reported.

The report called for judicial steps to punish the alleged wrongdoing. It found contracts awarded to the most expensive bidder, arms bought but left unused and frequent squandering.

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New rules curb baggage across King Hussein Bridge

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Public Security Department (PSD) on Tuesday announced new arrangements for travellers crossing the King Hussein Bridge to the Palestinian self-rule areas.

The new arrangements are designed to ease travel and transport of goods for travellers from both sides, a Jordan News Agency, Petra, statement said.

The new procedures stipulates that travellers are obliged to specify the size and quantity of goods they are carrying when crossing the bridge. The number of pieces of baggage is limited to three.

Travellers will be allowed to carry more than three pieces of baggage only after obtaining a special permission from both sides.

The statement said that

only employees of the self-rule authority will be allowed to transport electric equipment on the condition that it meets the new required sizes.

Travellers will be able to carry carpets with them, but seeds, medicines and fertilizers are banned.

Many expatriates, especially those who return from the Gulf, will want to go back to the self-rule areas and will be transporting furniture, electronics as well as other goods, one PSD official said.

"We had to specify the size and quantity of luggage and shipping boxes to only three," the official told the Jordan Times.

According to the official, passengers who do not follow the new rules will not be allowed to cross the bridge.

The new arrangements come in completion with

the signing of a June 21 protocol between Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

The protocol included cooperation in land and air transportation and provides for facilitating the transport of travellers and goods between Jordan and the Palestinian territories.

The protocol allows for the transportation of goods licensed by either of the two countries through the territories but disallowed any of the two sides' buses to operate on domestic routes in the other without special permits from the concerned authorities.

All goods transported between the two sides will be subject to tariffs and taxes active in the two countries unless the two sides decide to have mutual exemptions, according to the protocol.

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Sudanese expatriates in Egypt hold their breath during crisis

CAIRO (AFP) — Sudanese in Egypt are holding their breath, afraid of being caught in the middle of a crisis between their home in exile and the country they fled.

"If things go further than this, there will surely be trouble for us here," Joseph Abor, a southern Sudanese who has lived in Cairo for the past decade, told AFP.

Sudanese expatriates have warily watched the Egyptian media which have beaten war drums against the Islamic regime in Khartoum after President Hosni Mubarak accused it of trying to assassinate him on June 26.

Some Sudanese feared their Egyptian hosts would take to heart Mr. Mubarak's threats to retaliate and vent their anger out on them.

"The Egyptian people are very emotional. They wait for the word from their government," said Miryam Mdana, another southern Sudanese.

"The first day after the attack we were very worried people would do something to us," she said. "But then the next day Mubarak went on television and said the Sudanese people are goodhearted and we feel more at ease."

"We have two hopes: That the Egyptian government and people realise we are different from the regime and that there be no war," said Abdullah Tayeb, a northern Muslim who has lived in Egypt for two years.

Hamade said. "Lebanon is facing an African 'Sida' crisis," he said, using the French acronym for AIDS. Several hundreds of thousands of Lebanese live in Africa.

"Lebanese nationals returning from Africa, unknowingly carry the AIDS virus. The most dangerous thing is that these people most often come back to marry. That's why we imposed a pre-nuptial certificate," he told AFP.

According to officials, women represented two to three per cent of all cases at the start of the 1990s while now they are 18 per cent.

"Our only other weapon to fight back, besides the pre-nuptial certificate — is

through public information campaigns and an awareness drive at home and in Africa," Mr. Hamade said.

But he said for most Lebanese, AIDS was "still a taboo."

For Badriye, a 45-year-old mother of two who grew up in Africa and married her cousin, the pre-nuptial test has come too late. She contracted the AIDS virus from her husband who died two years ago.

In her village of Ain Yaacub in northern Lebanon, news of Badriye's "shameful" disease spread quickly and she was ostracized until her doctor encouraged her to appear in a television programme about AIDS.

She is now only the second person in Lebanon to have spoken publicly about the killer virus in an effort to inform others "and show them there is nothing to be afraid of."

"The people in the village are mostly uneducated. But the doctor came and spoke to them and he had coffee with me in front of them. I also appeared on television and the crew lunched with me. Things have changed," said Badriye.

Experts like Badriye's doctor, Jacques Mokhatb who heads the Lebanese AIDS society, and Elie Aaraj, who runs a community services group, agreed that "diseases linked to sexuality are taboo."

Belinda Abu Adal of SOS SIDA, a group which has also

Kuwaiti held over Sri Lanka maid death

KUWAIT (R) — A Kuwaiti woman has been arrested on suspicion of beating to death a Sri Lankan domestic helper, the third Asian maid to be killed in the emirate in a month, the Interior Ministry said on Tuesday.

The woman, a naturalised Kuwaiti of Egyptian origin, is the wife of the 22-year-old woman's employer, a ministry spokesman said by telephone.

The spokesman denied a newspaper report that the maid's employer, an Egyptian, had also been arrested. The woman's body was found at the couple's empty house on June 22.

An Arab expatriate was arrested earlier this month on suspicion of causing the death of another Sri Lankan maid, also in her early 20s, who was found dead in her bed in suspicious circumstances at her employer's house on June 4.

Diplomats said they understood the man was a Saudi acquaintance of the Kuwaiti employer. The Interior Ministry spokesman said he had no immediate information on the detained man's nationality.

Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry said on June 28 it had asked its embassy in Kuwait to investigate what it called the two murders.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Indian team on shopping visit to Israel

NEW DELHI (R) — A high-level Indian defence delegation left for Israel on Tuesday on a shopping visit aimed at boosting surveillance technology for India's Russian-designed tanks and fighter aircraft, officials said. They said the team of experts from all three services was led by Defence Secretary K.A. Nambiar, the Defence Ministry's top civil servant. The Press Trust of India (PTI) said the delegation would finalise details of India's proposed acquisition of Israel's sophisticated remotely piloted vehicles (RPVs) for surveillance to boost its artillery and land-based missiles. It said India might seek technology transfers of some RPV systems to boost its own RPV programme and may also seek ways to upgrade India's Russian battle tanks. Traditionally pro-Arab, India established diplomatic ties with Israel in January 1992.

Ashrawi stands down as head of rights group

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Former Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi is standing aside as head of the Independent Commission for Citizens Rights, she told AFP on Tuesday. "I will still be on the board," Dr. Ashrawi said, "but I don't want to run again. The post should be rotated." The ex-English literature lecturer who shot to fame in 1991 as the occupied territories' elected voice of the Palestinian struggle in the commission. She would officially hand over the reins in September at the body she was instrumental in founding more than a year ago. "I don't believe in on person institutions and I don't have time to run the commission all the time," Palestinian psychiatrist Iyad Sarraj was expected to take over. Dr. Ashrawi, 48, said: "I will be doing more writing and I think the best thing now will be to work for free and fair elections." She has just published her first non-academic work, called, "This Side of Peace."

Abu Zeid launches appeal procedure

CAIRO (AFP) — University professor Nasr Hamed Abu Zeid has begun legal proceedings to overturn a court order to separate from his wife on grounds of heresy. Court sources said the professor and his wife Ibtihal Yunes lodged an appeal on Sunday to suspend execution of the sentence and the next day filed their case in the supreme court. A tribunal is to study the case starting on Aug. 1. The Abu Zeid complained that the unprecedented ruling on June 15 ordering their separation "poses a threat to their lives," as under Islam the punishment for heresy is execution. The court was not competent to reach such a verdict and the ruling was invalid because the husband was "a believing Muslim," the couple insisted. On Thursday, another Cairo court is to hear a separate appeal filed by a colleague of Dr. Abu Zeid, Ahmad Hussein Al Ahwani, a science professor at Cairo University. An appeals court judge Dr. Abu Zeid, an Arabic professor, a heretic and ordered him separated from his wife on the grounds that a Muslim woman cannot be married to an apostate. The court ruled that Dr. Abu Zeid's writings attacked Islam.

Satanic cult plans to sacrifice babies

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A satanic cult in Israel is planning to sacrifice a newborn baby, a former member of the group has told a parliamentary committee. "The sacrificial rites with cats will soon be replaced by the killing of babies," a 19-year-old ex-cult follower told the education committee on Monday. "One of the cult members is pregnant and they plan to sacrifice her baby." Dressed in a black mask, the man identified only as Yaakov said hundreds of youths had joined the sect. "They are prepared to kill their parents, particularly their fathers," he added, saying he himself was a battered child. Yaakov described how the cell of 40-50 youths he belonged to for three years killed cats and sucked each other's blood. Israeli newspapers reported at the end of June that an Israeli teenager had stabbed to death another boy as an initiation rite for a satanic sect. However, Police Minister Moshe Shahal told the committee that no link had been established between the alleged killer and the sect. A second suspect who is a member of the cult was released Sunday night for lack of evidence. Mr. Shahal pointed out that there was no law against membership of cults, but he added that police closely monitor mystic sects in Israel.

Emir of Qatar meets Yemeni speaker

DOHA (AFP) — Yemen's speaker of Parliament Sheikh Abdullah Al Ahmar on Tuesday met Qatar's new Emir, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, who seized power in a bloodless coup last week, the official QNA news agency said. Sheikh Al Ahmar, who heads the Islamic fundamentalist Al Islah party which is a member of the coalition government in Sanaa, congratulated Sheikh Hamad on assuming power, the agency said.

Ciller says Greece backs Kurd rebels

ANKARA (R) — Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller on Tuesday accused rival Greece of supporting Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrillas fighting a separatist campaign in southeast Turkey. "Our neighbour Greece is apparently aiding the PKK. Our neighbour Greece is making death shrouds for Turks," Ms. Ciller told a meeting of deputies from her conservative True Path Party (DYP). Ms. Ciller said she had evidence of Greek backing for the rebels but did not elaborate. She warned Athens that its alleged support for the PKK would backfire. "Those who open their arms to the terrorists will fall into the terrorists' arms," she said. Greece denies frequent Turkish accusations it harbours the PKK and allows the rebels to train on its soil. Turkish officials have complained that six Greek deputies met PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan at a rebel base in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley last month.

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 77111-10	
PROGRAMME TWO	
14:00	Problem Child
14:30	Super Champs
15:00	Tomorrow's World
15:30	The House of Elton
17:00	Tennis: Wimbledon 1995
19:00	News in English
19:15	Tennis: Wimbledon 1995
19:30	News Headlines
19:35	Arthur Clarke's Mysterious Universe
20:30	The Bold and the Beautiful
21:15	Blood and Diamonds
22:00	News in English
22:25	Prim
22:45	The Jacksons
23:30	Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less
PRAYER TIMES	
03:56	Fajr
05:31	Dhuhr
12:40	Dhuhr
16:21	Asr
19:50	Maghreb
21:24	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Swedieh, Tel. 810740	
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 623785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624990	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
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Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 625543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 717131	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 717261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 717151	
Armenian International Church Tel. 625226	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 644195	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 634932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
Temperatures are expected to rise slightly with winds north-westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active and seas calm.	
Min./Max. temp. Amman ... 19/31	

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

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RAILWAY

TRAIN

6.00 a.m. every Monday

7.30 a.m. every Monday

5.00 p.m. every Sunday

ET PRICES

price in fils per kg

700 / 300

550 / 150

650 / 100

240 / 20

250 / 150

260 / 100

270 / 50

280 / 100



Minister of Information Khaled Karaki (centre), Director General of Jordan Radio and Television Ihsan Ramzi (left) chat with acting Ministry of Information Secretary General Fayed Qudah prior to their departure Tuesday for an Arab information ministers' conference in Cairo (Petra photo)

Arab ministers in Cairo for talks on information relations, media image

Amman (Petra) - Information Minister Khaled Karaki Tuesday arrived in Cairo at the head of an official delegation to attend the two-day meeting of the Council of Arab Information Ministers which convenes there today.

In a departure statement, Dr. Karaki said Jordan, along with other Arab nations, seeks to draw up new perceptions for Arab information relations.

"We are at an historic junction with the world in witnessing drastic changes and

transitions," the minister said.

Dr. Karaki stressed that the Jordanian democratic march has provided firm constitutional pillars for the country's information apparatus, such as freedom of expression and opinion.

Dr. Karaki said Arab information ministers will discuss topics such as freedom-related issues, proposals on aspects of an Arab information strategy, the role of information in fighting extremism, in the protection

of human rights and in the reflection of Islamic and Arab images in the media.

The ministers will also discuss means of enhancing inter-Arab coordination through Arab satellite channels and developing cooperation between Arab and international news agencies.

The Jordanian delegation includes Director General of Jordan Radio and Television Ihsan Ramzi and Fayed Hadidi from the Ministry of Information.

Royal Decree endorses Higher Council of Transport

AMMAN (Petra) - A Royal Decree was issued Tuesday endorsing the Higher Council of Transport regulation approved earlier by the Cabinet. The council will advance and evaluate the performance of the transport sector. It is expected to plan transport policies and following up their implementation. It was also entrusted with setting up committees on civil aviation, road, railway and marine transport, and a follow up panel. Chaired by Minister of Transport Samir Kassar, the council includes the ministers of planning, finance, tourism, public works, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Transport, directors general of the Jordanian Ports Corporation, the Civil Aviation Authority, the Aqaba Railway Corporation, the Public Transport Corporation, as well as three representatives of the private sector.

Businessmen discuss peace, national economy

AMMAN (Petra) - Businessmen here Tuesday said the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty will have positive effects on the Kingdom's economy if Israel lives up to its commitment towards establishing peace in the region and if the United States provides the necessary political and economic support needed to ensure the success of the peace process.

Vice President of the Jordanian Businessmen's Association Fakhri Bilbeisi spoke of the peace process as presenting a new phase of challenge for the region.

Mr. Bilbeisi noted that the national economy will face

this challenge by ensuring high-quality products, cutting down on the costs, providing the necessary cadres and developing all sectors of production.

He also called for reviewing the economic, financial and trade legislation package, and for removing all obstacles to investment as well as overcoming bureaucracy.

Mr. Bilbeisi voiced his support for the revitalisation of inter-Arab economic cooperation agreements and the creation of incentives for investments.

One of the positive effects,

he said, of the peace process will be the development of regional, environmental, tourist, water and industrial projects.

According to JBA board member Wa'el Ghneim, the economy is currently suffering from a shortage of cash liquidity due to the high demand for purchasing shares in shareholding companies, hotels and tourist companies.

Mr. Ghneim said he hoped that the peace process will have a positive impact on the national economy in order to bring an end to the economic recession.

Workshop tackles establishment needs of mineral industries institute

AMMAN (Petra) - A two-day workshop organised by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on the procedures of establishing a mineral industries institute in Jordan started here Tuesday.

Addressing the workshop, which was organised in cooperation with the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), Minister of Labour Nader Abu Shaar said the project provides the infrastructure for developing the already existing mineral industries and that the project will cover all small and medium sized industries.

Addressing the opening session, Dr. Abu Shaar said that the project seeks to increase demand for a highly qualified and skilled labour force and technicians.

Dr. Abu Shaar said he hoped that participants in the workshop will come up with results that positively reflect



Minister of Labour Nader Abu Shaar (second right), Vocational Training Corporation Director General Ali Nasrallah and representatives of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency open a workshop on establishing a mineral industries institute in the Kingdom (Petra photo)

on project planning and implementation.

VTC Director General Ali Nasrallah outlined his corporation's role in preparing and providing a trained labour force to meet the local market needs.

Mr. Nasrallah noted that the corporation has been able to provide the national labour market with some 100,000 skilled labourers.

Commenting on the proposed project, Mr. Nasrallah said the workshop represents a qualitative leap in the work of the corporation.

The project will be financed through Japanese contributions.

Japan will also provide the necessary training for Jordanian cadres who will be running the project.

The project hopes to execute goals laid out by a national plan designed to further develop vocational education and training.

Petra sees 144,811 tourists in 6 months

AMMAN (Petra) - The Petra Antiquities Department collected JD 1.5 million in admission fees from 144,811 visitors who visited the Nabataean city during the first six months of this year, according to Suleiman Farajat, director of the department.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Farajat stressed the need to speed up tourism development plans for the region, particularly in cooperation with the Petra Regional Organisation Council. According to Mr. Farajat, the ancient city of Petra has become one of the most important tourist attractions in the world.

AL al Bayt Foundation opens scholarly debate on religion

AMMAN (Petra) - His Royal Highness Prince Hassan, the Regent, today opens the 10th session of the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilisation Research (AL al Bayt Foundation) to be held under the theme: "Muslims and the dialogue of religious civilisations in the contemporary world".

Researchers and scholars from different countries will discuss 23 research papers, in addition to working papers on Islamic da'wa, challenges of the post-modern age, identity crises, cultural strategies as well as a dialogue between religious civilisations, according to academy president Dr. Naseruddin Al Assad.

Taking part in the session will be 80 academy members, experts and guests from 30 countries. The academy holds its session on a biennial basis here in Amman.

Jordanian-French medical conference to delve into genetics, genetic diseases

By Rima Corthawi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN - This year's Jordanian-French Medical Association (JFMA) conference has selected "genetics and genetic diseases" as its theme because of the growing interest worldwide in this developing field of medicine, said JFMA President and paediatrician Fathyeh Saudi.

"Our meeting will be informative and will serve to bring genetic concepts to reality for local physicians and paramedical personnel as well as maintain contacts between Jordanian and French experts for the exchange of knowledge, experiences and the latest advancements," said Dr. Saudi.

Genetics, the study of genes, is a relatively new science.

"Discovery of the 46 chromosomes present in human cells was only made in 1956," Dr. Saudi said. Chromosomes are structures

forming the bulk of a cell nucleus, and carrying tens of thousands of genes, which are responsible for the development of all the tissues and organs as well as the external features of the body.

As "units of inheritance", according to Dr. Saudi, genes control the emergence of hereditary characteristics and carry instructions for the development of cells, by providing information about making proteins.

"In other words, genes influence all traits of character and outward appearance of individuals," Dr. Saudi said.

In the developed world, massive amounts of research is conducted in genetics. According to Dr. Saudi, the efforts are geared towards developing a human map of genes, which will enable experts to locate all the genes in the chromosomes.

"This is very important, especially that many diseases and human malfunc-

tions have been proved to be related to genes," said Dr. Saudi.

For instance, thalassemia (or Mediterranean anaemia) as well as various birth defects are shown to be genetic problems, said paediatrician Hatem Shanti, a clinical genetics and cytogenetics specialist.

"Hypertension, diabetes, arteriosclerosis as well as colon and breast cancer are also known to be related to some genes," said Dr. Saudi.

It is within genes that mutations may initiate or progress a large number of cancers, she explained.

The process of locating genes, then, paves the way, for diagnosing, preventing and treating genetic diseases, Dr. Saudi said.

"Gene therapy is already used in developed countries to treat cancer and some abnormalities related to lung secretions.

In cancer patients, genes can target cancerous cells to make them more amenable

'No-stress' information service to start up at hotels soon

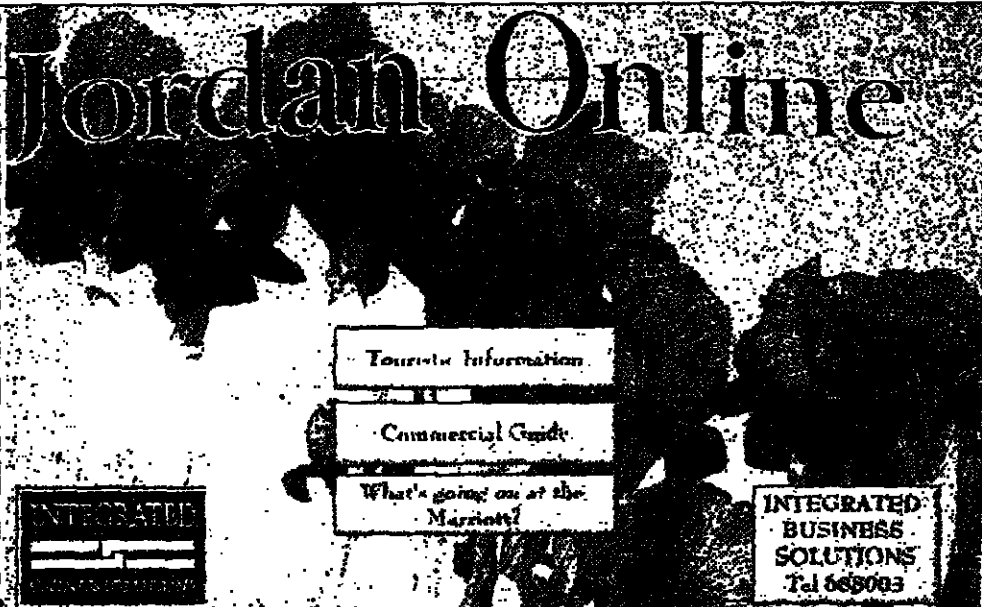
By Amy Henderson
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

Amman - The quest for information in Jordan is a battle often lost. Phone numbers are hard to find. Proper addresses do not exist. Arranging excursions could be a hair-raising experience. And for travellers, this can be troubling. A new service on offer within the next two weeks should alleviate the stress associated with the search for elusive information.

Jordan Online, coming soon to a major hotel near you, will put valuable information about Jordan at the fingertips of weary travellers and busy businessmen, and others who have grown weary of the fight.

This new user-friendly computer system will provide general and specific information about Jordan, its major tourist attractions, commercial business, history of the Kingdom, hotels, cuisine and shopping, to name a few.

"This idea came to us several months ago, actually from people outside of Jordan," said Ramzi Abdel Jabbar, a managing partner of Integrated Business Solutions, the company that designed the system. "They do not know where to go or



The 'Jordan Online' logo on a computer monitor

promote the system as a general guide, a tour of the system renders an impressive array of information and graphic design.

"The idea for this system is not new," said Mr. Abdel Jabbar. "It is used in other countries, but here there is nothing really comparable. It is a necessary service for people."

"Jordan Online will be an additional guest service," said Ahmad Kiswani, Regency Palace Front desk manager. "But not only will

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed times and places with the concerned institutions.

FILMS

- "Murder on the Orient Express" at the British Council at 7:00 p.m.
- "The Civil War: a very bloody affair (1862)," at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- Paintings by Jordanian Artist Muhammad Majali at the Phoenix Gallery of Culture and Art.
- Works by Iraqi artist Tahija Al Hakim at Ab'ad At Gallery.
- Exhibition demonstrating the development of cinema over the past century at the French Cultural Centre.
- Exhibition of works by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at Orfali Gallery

PALESTINE HOSPITAL

announces that its
new telephone no. is
607071

Sri Lanka Navy destroys rebel boats in sea battle

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka Navy fast-attack craft chased and blew up at least three Tamil Tiger guerrilla boats in a fierce sea battle off the rebels' Jaffna stronghold in the north early Tuesday, military sources said.

Air Force Pucara ground-attack aircraft and helicopter gunships attacked the flotilla of guerrilla "Sea Tiger" boats when they beached after the navy repulsed a rebel attack, they said.

"At least 10 terrorist craft came close to attack our fast-attack craft (FAC) providing escort off Jaffna," a senior military officer told Reuters. "Our FACs intercepted and destroyed three terrorist boats. We saw them catching fire and exploding," he said. "Terrorists in the boats would have died but we don't know how many."

The fight with the rebel boats occurred off Polikandi, between the rebel naval base at Velvettilai and Point Pedro, on Jaffna's northern coast, sources said.

The navy convoy, consisting of two landing craft

escorted by three Dvora-class fast-attack craft, was heading towards the Vettalaikerni army camp on Jaffna's last coast from the Kankesanurai Navy Base on the north coast.

"The navy proceeded on its mission after repelling the attack," the military officer said. One sailor was injured in the clash.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, fighting for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in Sri Lanka's north and east, have been building up their navy to pose a threat to Sri Lanka's tiny navy.

The government navy has been forced to step up escorts for its handful of slow-moving landing craft, which supply isolated army outposts on the northern coast, because of the threat of Sea Tiger suicide boats.

Last week, 1,000 Sea Tigers in a flotilla of armoured boats staged an amphibious raid on the army's Mandaitivu Island base, west of Jaffna, killing more

than 100 soldiers while losing 50 rebels.

Navy FACs destroyed another rebel boat off Jaffna early Monday morning, a military spokesman said.

Two rebels were killed in an army ambush Tuesday morning in the northeastern Mullaitivu area, he said. Jaffna residents said the rebels could step up attacks to mark "Black Tiger week" this week in which they commemorate the deaths of rebels from their Black Tiger suicide squads.

Black Tiger suicide squads are believed responsible for assassinating former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa.

The government appealed Tuesday to newspaper editors to avoid publishing news stories that could hurt the morale of soldiers in their war against Tamil rebels.

The appeal comes when President Chandrika Kumaratunga has warned that she may curb press freedom because of what she regards as

irresponsible reporting. "We want peace. To achieve it we have to fight," Media Minister Dhamasiri Senanayake told editors of local newspapers at a meeting.

The minister requested the editors not to write stories that could create communal problems between the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamils.

A few days ago, the military suffered its worst setback when Tamil rebels attacked a northern army camp on June 28 and killed 110 people including six civilians.

"We take the war situation seriously and the media should play a responsible role. Trying to analyse military secrets is advantageous to the enemy," the president told a meeting in May.

Meanwhile, opposition legislators Tuesday staged their first sit-down protest outside Sri Lanka's parliament calling for President Chandrika Kumaratunga's government to deliver on election pledges.

Secret Beijing visit points to new Chinese outlook on Hong Kong

HONG KONG (AFP) — Hong Kong's Chief Secretary Anson Chan revealed Tuesday that she had made a secret trip to Beijing, raising hopes of a more positive relationship in the run-up to China's resumption of sovereignty over the territory in 1997.

Speaking to reporters, Ms. Chan — Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten's second-in-command — said she had met Foreign Minister and Vice Premier Qian Qichen, as well as China's top official for Hong Kong affairs, Tu Ping, during a three-day "relaxing holiday" in the Chinese capital.

"I came away... really feeling very good and very encouraged about the prospect for more positive cooperation between the two sides," Ms. Chan said after briefing Mr. Patten and his cabinet, the Executive Council, on the trip.

Not only did Mr. Lu, who

broke a hospital stay to meet Ms. Chan, agree to keep in close touch with her, but the chief secretary also got an open invitation from Mr. Qian to visit China "at any time," she said.

In return, she invited Mr. Qian to visit Hong Kong. "I hope that on the basis of this first visit, it will be possible for us to establish a more positive, warmer relationship," she said, adding emphatically that "no deals" were struck during her talks.

Ms. Chan's trip came two years to the day before Britain returns its last major overseas possession to China, which has promised Hong Kong a "high degree of autonomy" for at least 50 years beyond 1997.

It also suggested a turnaround in China's outlook on Hong Kong, after nearly three years of sour relations with Britain prompted by Mr. Patten's attempt to increase

democracy here. "It's recognition that further actions need to be taken, not just words," said Michael De Golyer, a political scientist at Hong Kong Baptist College who is closely monitoring the run-up to 1997.

Public confidence has sagged in recent months as China continued to shun contact with Mr. Patten's administration. The local economy has shown serious signs of slower growth and rising unemployment.

"It began to dawn in Beijing that something seriously had to be done," Mr. De Golyer said.

After months of Sino-British stalemate, two outstanding issues were resolved in June — one on the setting up of a post-1997 Court of Final Appeal to underpin the rule of law, the other on financing details for Hong Kong's mammoth new airport.

Seoul resumes rice shipment to North

SEOUL (AFP) — Two rice-laden freighters left South Korean ports Tuesday, resuming an emergency food lifeline to relieve acute shortages in Communist North Korea.

Officials said the two cargo vessels, the Toljin carrying 2,000 tonnes and the Hangin loaded with 2,500 tonnes, steamed out of the ports of Donghae and Mokpo at 0900 GMT.

A third ship, the Eastern Venture with 3,500 tonnes of rice, which had been scheduled to leave at the same time, was blocked by dense fog shrouding Pusan Port and would sail early Wednesday, officials said.

All three had been on their way North last week when Seoul angrily ordered them to return after the North had forced the first ship to raise the North Korean flag while unloading its 2,000 tonne cargo.

They are now scheduled to discharge their cargoes in relay at the North's Chongjin Port between Wednesday and Friday, Yonhap News Agency said.

A second shuttle involving 13 freighters, carrying 40,000 tonnes in total, will sail next week, Yonhap said.

The resumption of the shipments, after a week's hiatus, followed a cabinet decision in Seoul Monday to accept a rare official expression of regret from North Korea over the flag incident.

It also followed a detailed agreement between the two Koreas, reached in talks in Beijing Tuesday, that the ships would fly no national flag from a point 3.2 miles (5.1 kilometres) from Chongjin port, a National Unification Board spokesman said.

"The point where a South Korean vessel will pull down the South Korean flag will be 3.2 miles from Chongjin harbour piers, a point where the vessel will meet a waiting North Korean pilot boat," spokesman Kim Kyong-Woong said.

The South's Vice Unification Minister Song Yong-Dae Monday said the relief operation was back in full swing as it had accepted the telegram of regret, sent by Jon Kum-Chol, advisor to the North's Committee for the Promotion of External Economic Cooperation.

"All necessary steps including husking, sacking and shipping rice will soon be resumed," Song said.

Analysts here said Monday they saw Seoul's acceptance of the regret message as a victory for moderates in the South Korean administration, who see the rice aid as a pragmatic goodwill signal to its erstwhile Communist foe in the North.

The fact that North Korea had responded at an official level to Seoul's protest — rather than turning its back — was an indication that Pyongyang too wanted the shipments to go ahead, the analysts said.

In the apology Mr. Jon reportedly said the order to raise the North's flag had been given because Chongjin Port authorities were not aware of the fine print of the rice-aid agreement which stipulated no national flags, the source said.

Seoul had earlier rejected a lower-level North Korean trading company explanation of the confusion over the flag as unofficial.

Said one analyst here: "The fact that it came from the same man whose signature was on the Beijing negotiations was of far more importance than whether it was an explanation or an apology."

U.S. military wants new 'smart' weapons

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. military, concerned over a spreading threat from sophisticated arms, is launching a \$1 billion drive to test new "smart" weapons such as those designed to attack chemical and biological storage sites.

Defence Department officials are worried that dozens of Third World and other nations now own or can buy new missiles, radar and other equipment that threatens U.S. forces.

One month after a Bosnian Serb missile shot down a U.S. F-16 fighter, senior defence officials told an unusual public briefing last week that new concepts on the American drawing board set for demonstrations in one to three years include:

— Improved miniature decoys to be launched in waves from aircraft to confuse defences and protect U.S. warplanes from anti-aircraft missiles.

— Laser beams that foil enemy anti-ship missiles and make them crash harmlessly into the sea.

— Detectors that not only might determine whether a U.S. base or seaport is under

biological attack but identify the agent for quick use of medical counter-measures.

— High-explosive cruise missiles and bombs which could "safely" destroy underground nuclear, chemical or biological weapons sites. The package would include sensors to detect release of deadly plutonium or nerve agents.

Defence Under-Secretary Paul Kaminski told reporters that \$1 billion which will be spent on the new concepts in 1996 financial year beginning in October is more than the total spent on demonstrating such new programmes in the past.

But the effort is well worth the cost, Mr. Kaminski stressed, citing the West's overwhelming use of high-tech weapons to smash Iraq's military forces in the 1991 Gulf war.

He said that while details of most of the programmes were secret, the key to testing the effectiveness of such weapons was to make sure that troops who will use them are involved in the whole process.

"The real issue here... is not simply in developing the best technology or even building the best equipment,

but getting this combination of people and equipment in the field to use it wisely," Mr. Kaminski told reporters.

Some of the new concepts will fail, officials said, while others such as ongoing research on pilotless spy planes and counter-measures for undersea mines have shown very encouraging results.

"They (mines) are, in effect, the poor man's great equaliser," said Assistant Deputy Under-Secretary Lou Marquet.

"We've had some very unpleasant experiences with mines in the past. It is crucial for us to address the threat as rapidly as we possibly can," he said.

The United States is currently sending its new unmanned "Predator" spyplane to Albania for remote-controlled flights over Bosnia to provide NATO peacekeepers with information on Serbian and Bosnian government forces.

But Mr. Kaminski said that an even more sophisticated high-altitude UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) will be built that can fly for about 40 hours and cover 40,000 square nautical miles in a day.

Tension high ahead of Armenia elections

YEREVAN (AFP) — Armenians go to the polls Wednesday for the first time since Communist rule crumbled to elect a new parliament amid high tension following the banning of several opposition parties.

Several thousand people massed Monday evening at central Liberty Square to the capital Yerevan, as they have done over past few weeks, to demand that these parties be allowed to take part in the elections.

Dozens of people have set up camp in the square, under the red, blue orange Armenian flag, to call for the release of their relatives, 14 members of the banned opposition Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsyun), jailed for terrorism. A 15th member died in prison in May.

The opposition has accused President Levon Ter-Petrosian, a moderate nationalist voted to power in October 1991, of staging an about-face on democracy by banning certain opposition parties.

Mr. Ter-Petrosian and his supporters were the first along with the Baltic states to heed calls for liberty and national identity in the late 1980s which helped accelerate the demise of the Soviet empire.

"The leaders in power in Armenia are showing their true colours today, we can't talk about a democratic campaign, and we cannot rule out the possibility that they will just keep up the facade of an opposition after the elections," said Vazgen Manukian, leader of the opposition National Democratic Union.

The government denies any totalitarian intent, and says that Wednesday's polls will be carried out strictly according to the law, outgoing president of the National Assembly Bobken Araktsian said.

The 2.4 million registered voters will choose among 13 parties to elect 100 deputies. The Electoral Commission has banned candidates from nine other parties, citing irregularities in their registration.

The new parliament will replace the current Supreme Soviet elected in the summer of 1990.

A referendum on a new post-Soviet constitution — which will recognise fundamental freedoms and set up a parliamentary republic — is scheduled for the same day.

Since 1993 the opposition has organised huge anti-government rallies, bringing tens of thousands of people into the streets of Yerevan. The nervous political climate has been exacerbated by last December's banning of Dashnaktsyun, the oldest political party founded in 1890, which emerged in 1991 from the decades of clandestinity under Communist rule.

Mr. Ter-Petrosian has accused the party of protecting a branch of the underground paramilitary, charged with involvement in political assassinations and drug trafficking.

Shuttle, Mir go their separate ways

SPACE CENTRE, Houston (AP) — After five days of speeding around Earth under the flags of two nations, shuttle Atlantis and space station Mir separated Tuesday with a gentle push and moved into their own orbits again.

But first, two cosmonauts left the Mir in a small Soyuz transport ship and moved 76 metres (250 feet) away to record the undocking of the shuttle and space station which had flown as one large spacecraft — the largest ever.

In turn, Atlantis made its own circular flight to photograph the Soyuz reattachment to Mir.

"The button is pushed, the hooks are driving," said shuttle Commander Robert

"hoot" Gibson, telling the space centre that the mechanism that linked the two craft was being released.

At the point, springs eased the shuttle away from the Mir, which had been anchored to the docking mechanism in the shuttle cargo bay. Slowly the two giant spacecraft — the 100-tonne Atlantis and the 123-tonne Mir — separated. The crew on the Soyuz reported it had a good view of the process.

The three spacecraft performed an intricate ballet, sparkling in the sunshine against the blackness of space.

The sun was so bright that it obscured the docking target on Mir, but the Soyuz was

reattached successfully to the station. The cosmonauts also had to contend with a shutdown of the main computer on Mir, which in turn failed to turn on the station lights.

"Atlantis, it has been an inspiring visit with our neighbours in space," said mission control.

"We look forward to returning," the Houston Control Centre added.

"We agree with that.... We agree 100 per cent," Gibson replied.

The space-to-ground radio link crackled with several sets of conversations, with mission control in Kaliningrad speaking to the cosmonauts on Soyuz in Russian.

Dalai Lama celebrates 60th birthday

NEW DELHI (R) — The Dalai Lama Tuesday began three days of 60th birthday celebrations with a prayer meeting at dawn in a park dedicated to Lord Buddha in the Indian capital.

The Tibetan god-king, seated on a yellow brocade prayer mat, led a baritone chant by some 40 monks in traditional maroon and saffron robes, facing a large golden statue of the Buddha amid burning incense and the accompaniment of prayer

symbols. After the 45-minute prayer session, the Dalai Lama planted a pipal tree sapling in front of the statue. The Buddha is believed to have attained salvation under a pipal tree.

The Dalai Lama's birthday falls on July 6 but is being commemorated by three days of seminars and cultural programmes in honour of the 1989 Nobel Peace laureate.

The four seminars, on non-violence and compassion in

the 21st century, time and transcendence, inner and outer disciplines and sciences and spirituality, will include internationally prominent academics, organisers said.

Organisers said they had chosen India as the venue for the festivities.

"This honour has been given to India because His Holiness is an incarnation of Lord Buddha and India is the land of Buddha," Lakhan Mehrotra, an organiser, said.

Taiwan steps up damage control over Chinese military wargame panic

TAIPEI (AFP) — Taiwan Tuesday continued its efforts to minimise the effect of reports on Chinese wargames which have triggered public panic and sent the local bourse tumbling.

Senior government officials called on the public to remain calm, while reiterating that they had learned nothing about the so-called Dong Hai military exercise launched by China. Even if there had been a Chinese wargame, it was a routine one, not targeted against Taiwan, the officials said.

"I have not learned anything about this," government spokesman Jason Hu said. He called on the public not to be panicked by the reported exercise.

"This would only give the Chinese Communists a chance to frighten the people

here, which would affect our stability," Mr. Hu told reporters here.

Vincent Siew, chairman of the Mainland Affairs Council, also called for calm.

The Military Spokesman's Office, under the Defence Ministry, said it could not provide any information on the exercise in question.

On Monday the Taiwanese press and the three state television stations prominently reported on the wargame. The mass-circulation United Daily News said the exercises were launched by the Chinese air force and navy on June 30 off the coast of China's eastern Zhejiang province.

The leading China Times newspaper said the exercise started along the southeastern coast of China, separated from Taiwan only by the

Taiwan Straits. Earlier Monday, Taiwanese military sources said the last month's exercises, the fifth since September, were an obvious retaliation move following "private" visits abroad by Taiwanese leaders. The manoeuvres were intended to serve as a warning to the island, the sources said.

Taiwanese investors reacted nervously to the reports, with the local bourse plunging 132.03 points, or 2.42 per cent, Monday to finish at 5,312.94 points.

After the tumble, the Central News Agency (CNA) released three articles retracting its earlier report on the military manoeuvres and apologising to its readers for what it claimed "inaccurate information."

China slams U.S. allegations on handling of human rights activist

BEIJING (AFP) — China Tuesday rejected Washington's allegations that it had violated consular agreements over the case of detained U.S. citizen Harry Wu — and instead accused U.S. officials of acting without authorisation.

"As far as we are concerned, we have all along honoured the Sino-U.S. consular agreement," Foreign Ministry spokesman Chen Jian said when asked about U.S. allegations that Beijing had failed to comply with a requirement to allow consular access to detained U.S. nationals within 48 hours.

While denying violating the agreement, Mr. Chen acknowledged that although the Foreign Ministry had conveyed the U.S. "proposal" to pay a visit to human rights activist Wu, detained on June 19, to the relevant Chinese

departments, "we have yet to get a reply."

But he added that, far from China being in the wrong, it was the U.S. side that had "not only repeatedly violated the consular agreement but went back on its word on a lot of major political issues."

While the "political issues" remark clearly referred to Washington's decision to allow a visit by Taiwanese President Lee Teng-Hui in June, Mr. Chen declined to elaborate on his allegations over consular matters.

However, he said Beijing was "dissatisfied" that "without the approval of the Chinese side, officials from the U.S. embassy in China directly carried out their functions in the localities of China" over the matter of Mr. Wu.

He was referring to a trip by a U.S. consular official to far-northwestern Xinjiang to

try to track down Mr. Wu, 58, a former Chinese citizen and long-time political prisoner who was detained as he tried to enter the province through the Horgas pass from Kazakhstan.

Mr. Chen also rejected U.S. Under-Secretary of State Peter Tarnoff's allegation that China had sent the U.S. side on a wild-goose chase, saying simply that the accusation was based on "false" information.

Mr. Tarnoff summoned China's charge d'affaires in Washington Monday to complain that the U.S. consular official who travelled to Xinjiang had been told on arrival that the hotel where Chinese officials in Beijing had said Mr. Wu was being held did not exist and that no information was available on him.

Mr. Chen said public security authorities were continuing investigations into the

case of Mr. Wu, who had "repeatedly sneaked into China by using an alias" and, without approval, entered non-open areas and organisations "to conduct illegal activities."

"There are certain countries in the world who like to tell other countries what to do and how to do it. That is a pretty bad habit, which will not do good for the settlement of the issue," he said, adding that the competent departments of China would make a "just" decision on Mr. Wu's case.

The activist's detention comes at a time of tense Sino-U.S. relations due to Beijing's fury over the visit of President Lee of Taiwan, which China regards as a renegade province.

Mr. Chen accused Washington of playing up Mr. Wu's case, as well as making wrong allegations

that China had violated international treaties by shipping M-11 missiles to Pakistan, to divert attention from its responsibility for causing the deterioration in Sino-U.S. ties by allowing Mr. Lee's visit.

"It is utterly groundless to turn a case that is a purely consular matter into a political issue. If the U.S. side is bent on doing that, the responsibility will be solely born by the U.S. side," said Mr. Chen.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns described Monday the Chinese behaviour over Mr. Wu as "completely unacceptable."

However, he said, Washington was not yet prepared to take retaliatory steps, hoping instead to clear up the matter through "private dialogue."

Mr. Wu, who spent 19

years in Chinese prison camps before emigrating to the United States, is an outspoken critic of the country's penal system.

His detention is believed to be related to a trip last year, during which he helped with the secret filming of a documentary alleging that China sells organs removed from executed prisoners for transplant operations.

Meanwhile, leading Chinese dissident Liu Gang said Tuesday that he had been given a 10-day jail sentence for failing to report to the police authorities following his release from prison two weeks ago.

A dozen police came to his parents' home in northeastern Jilin province at 9:00 a.m. (0100 GMT) Tuesday and forced him to accompany them to the local police station, Mr. Liu said by telephone.

UAE tackles a weighty problem

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Health authorities in the United Arab Emirates are facing a serious problem — the bulging number of overweight people. A recent survey of 5,031 citizens revealed that a majority of them were overweight. Dubai's Gulf News daily reported. It said out of 2,180 males surveyed, 42 per cent were overweight. The number of obese women was even higher. The study showed that out of 2,851 females, 32 per cent were overweight and 42 per cent were "excessively overweight."

To tackle the problem, the Health Ministry has launched a "fight obese" programme. A senior official told the newspaper that the plan would aim at changing people's habits. The phenomenon is blamed on eating habits and lack of exercise.

India's Rambo completes year in prison

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Sanjay Dutt, the macho-man of Indian films, completed a year in prison Monday in connection with a series of bomb blasts in Bombay two years ago which left some 300 people dead.

Dutt, 28, who surrendered to the police following the serial blasts, is being held under a tough anti-terrorism law which carries a maximum punishment of 20 years in jail and for which bail is not available. Son of a former MP from India's ruling Congress (I) Party, Dutt was popular as India's "Sylvester Stallone" in Bombay, hub of India's booming film industry, because of the tough-guy roles he preferred to play. The muscular, long-haired Dutt is charged with illegally buying assault rifles from suspects directly involved in the March 12, 1993 blasts which killed at least 300 people in one of the world's deadliest urban terror attacks.

Stand-in son helps open a sculptural look at Papa

PARIS (AP) — Could that be "Papa" Hemingway, reincarnated in the tiny bar named after him at the Ritz Hotel? He had the moustache, the worldly dash, the ready smile and laugh of the man who "liberated" the swanky hotel from the Nazis 50 years ago. No, it was his son Jack, 71, admiring the opening of a lively show of 10 sculptures by French artist Marc Dray. "It's a touching homage to Papa all right," said Jack, in town with his wife Angela between fishing trips in Europe, stopping to see the show in honour of Hemingway's literary works.

"Hemingway's books are very precious to me," said Dray as guests sipped champagne and ogled his works like "The Bicephalous Bull, The Boat Of Santiago Grouper Fish, and Bulls For Lady Ashley, in the show to last until July 21. Curious but evocative, and semi-figurative, the works are assemblages of wood, wire, plastic, metal, leather.

"Things I've often found on the beach," said the artist, who added that the first serious book he'd ever read was Old Man And The Sea. "This one's great," said Jack Hemingway, patting a movable pair of red boxer's gloves with names of Hemingway's works inscribed on them, called Two Fists. That's All. The cozy bar, formerly known as Bertin's Bar for its famous bartender who reigned during 23 years and renamed after the American writer. As legend has it, an ebullient Hemingway "liberated" his favourite hotel in August 1944 by shooting off a few rounds towards the roof and asking for a round of Martinis for everyone in the bar.

Revenge of jilted husband

LONDON (AFP) — A jilted postwoman's husband took revenge on his wife mailing a video of their love-making through letter boxes on her round, the British press reported Tuesday. Six weeks after Susan Ryan, 33, left her husband John, 38, she found that more than 20 copies of their home sex videos were in the hands of her customers. The story of revenge was told in northern Crown Court in northern England, when Ryan, 34, was cleared of attempting to murder his wife after wrestling a breadknife from her and stabbing her in the neck during an argument about the video.

Anti-nuclear protest hits French embassy in Rome

ROME (R) — Five activists in red boiler suits abseiled down the front of the French embassy in Rome Tuesday and unfurled a banner condemning President Jacques Chirac's decision to resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

Reuters journalists outside the 16th century Farnese Palace, where the embassy is housed in central Rome, said the protesters from the environmental group Greenpeace used ropes to hang from the facade, part of which was designed by Michelangelo.

Dressed in red boiler suits, they unfurled a banner which showed the French leader with a radioactive symbol above his head and carried the words "stop Chirac".

They were joined on a balcony of the embassy by Gianfranco Nannini, one of Italy's top rock stars, who had entertained about 200 demonstrators in the square with songs including "Monsieur Le President" from a truck in front of the building.

The six were brought down from the balcony on a fire engine ladder and had their identities noted by police. Nannini descended amid cheers after grabbing hold of the French flag.

Minor scuffles between police and demonstrators occurred during the one-hour protest.

French diplomats were not

available for comment.

Mr. Chirac's announcement last month to resume tests from September on the Mururoa Atoll whipped up a storm of protest throughout the South Pacific and elsewhere.

Australia and New Zealand have taken the strongest stands against the resumed French testing, freezing defence ties with Paris and clouding the prospects of French defence contractors.

Rainbow Warrior II, the greenpeace flagship, set course on Monday for Mururoa.

About a hundred testing opponents saw the boat off as it left Tahiti for the sail of about a thousand kms (600 miles), which Greenpeace estimated would take three of four days.

"We sail for Mururoa with the knowledge that the Tahitians and millions of people around the world support us and demand an end to nuclear testing everywhere and forever," Greenpeace official Jean-Luc Thierry said as the ship left Papeete, according to a statement released by Greenpeace France in Paris.

President Chirac "has seriously underestimated public opposition to the resumption of nuclear testing in France, in Tahiti and at the international level," Mr. Thierry said.

On board were 31 anti-nuclear activists and journal-

ists including left-wing bishop Jacques Gaillot, fired from his French diocese by Pope John Paul this year, and Polynesian independence campaigner Oscar Temaru.

Greenpeace's goal is to sail to Mururoa by July 10, the 10th anniversary of the bombing and sinking of the original Rainbow Warrior by French secret agents in New Zealand.

French officials have said they will not allow the ship and its whole crew within 12 nautical miles of the atoll.

Mr. Chirac's approval of eight nuclear tests has angered many Tahitians and other South Pacific residents fearful of radiation contamination and environmental damage.

It also has sparked new life into the French Polynesian independence movement. France is the South Pacific's last colonial power and controls three territories, French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna Islands.

Independence movements in the territories have traditionally been linked to nuclear testing, rising at the height of opposition to testing in the 1980s and ebbing after the testing moratorium adopted by Paris in 1992.

The Rainbow Warrior II had arrived in the Tahitian capital Papeete a day earlier, where anti-testing protesters had virtually paralysed the

city for the previous three days by blockading major roads and clogging the streets with marches.

But the road blocks lifted Sunday, allowing a return to normality on the island by the time the Rainbow Warrior left.

In Perth, Australia, police Tuesday charged a man and a woman over last month's fire-bombing of the French consulate in the West Australian city.

The firebombing followed France's decision to resume nuclear testing in the Pacific.

University student Bosco Boskovich, 20, and an unemployed woman, Mayak Catts, 21, have been charged with damage by fire, detective John Gisson told reporters in Perth.

No one was hurt in the June 17 blaze, immediately claimed as the work of a group calling itself the Pacific Popular Front.

Investigations showed the group was a creation of the accused, Mr. Gisson said.

"I think this was something they made up on the spot of the moment," he said. Boskovich and Catts are being held in police custody and will appear in court in Perth Wednesday morning, he added.

"I would suggest the anti-nuclear movement was not involved in this," Mr. Gisson said.

Judge gives Berlusconi a reprieve until September

MILAN (R) — A judge Tuesday postponed until September a decision on whether Italy's former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi should stand trial on corruption charges connected to his media empire.

Judicial sources said Judge Fabio Paparella, presiding over the criminal hearing, had agreed to a request from defence lawyers for Mr. Berlusconi and 20 other suspects for more time to study new prosecution documents.

Judge Paparella last month also turned down a request by investigating magistrates for the businessman-turned-politician to stand trial over alleged tax fraud on a property deal.

His latest decision meant Mr. Berlusconi, who did not attend the closed-door hearing but was represented by two lawyers in court, must wait until Sept. 20 for a decision that could boost or bust his political aspirations.

It also dimmed the pros-

pect of an early general election in the autumn. Political commentators believe Mr. Berlusconi may not want to risk a return to the polls with the possibility of a trial hanging over him.

They said a decision to prosecute Mr. Berlusconi could kill off his short but spectacular political career while a move in his favour would boost his campaign to regain the premiership.

A fresh hearing cannot be held before September as Italian courts close from July 15 to Sept. 15.

The delay should also allow a "batch of documents on bank accounts, which were seized recently in Switzerland," to be returned to Italy for examination before a decision is made on whether to commit Mr. Berlusconi to trial.

The famous pool of Milan "mani pulite" (clean hands) magistrates have accused Mr. Berlusconi of complicity in the payment by companies in

his Fininvest media empire of alleged bribes to tax police in return for lenient audits between 1989 and 1991.

They also accuse him of complicity in the payment of an alleged bribe to tax inspectors investigating the ownership structure of Telepiu, a pay TV business in which Fininvest officially has a 10 per cent stake.

They asked in May for Mr. Berlusconi and the 20 others to stand trial. Mr. Berlusconi, ousted as prime minister last December after seven months in office, has said the payments were extorted from Fininvest executives by rapacious tax officials.

He denied any knowledge of the payments, totalling 330 million lire (\$200,000), at the time they were made and says he is the victim of a political witch hunt by magistrates.

The best known of them, former magistrate Antonio Di Pietro who quit the clean hands team last December, was himself questioned for 18

hours Sunday by magistrates investigating whether he had acted illegally in his enquiries.

Lawyers for Finance Police General Giuseppe Cerciello have accused Mr. Di Pietro of using unorthodox methods to get suspects to make incriminating statements against him and Mr. Berlusconi.

Those accused with Mr. Berlusconi include his younger brother and business associate Paolo, Fininvest tax adviser Salvatore Sciascia and senior members of the Finance Police.

A separate criminal session opened in Milan Monday to decide whether senior managers of Mr. Berlusconi's advertising company Publitalia should stand trial for corruption.

In that case, prosecutors have filed charges against 37 people, including former managing director Marcello Dell'Utri, of false accounting, tax evasion and misappropriation of funds.

8 more killed in Karachi; media crackdown escalates

KARACHI (AFP) — Eight people were killed by gunfire Tuesday as security forces continued their search for arms and militants, and two more newspapers were banned in an escalating media crackdown, police and officials said.

A policeman and a civilian were shot dead in western

Orangi district, where a siege by some 1,000 police and paramilitary soldiers to seize illegal arms and gunmen entered a third day, the officials said.

Six other people were killed by snipers in other parts of the city, as violence persisted despite agreement between the government and

the opposition Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) to hold talks in Islamabad on Thursday.

In the central district of Jalalabad, gunmen attacked a police vehicle, causing minor injuries to five occupants, police said.

The intensity of the violence appears to have de-

clined after last month's bloodshed in which more than 350 people were killed.

Newspaper industry sources said the government of southern Sindh province had withdrawn publishing permission for 120 planned newspapers and banned two more evening papers in Karachi, capital of Sindh.

Japan ruling parties defend odd-ball coalition

TOKYO (R) — Japan's ruling parties hit back Tuesday at critics of their left-right coalition, saying they were introducing a new mood of harmony and running the country as smoothly as ever.

"An age of coalition governments has begun, and though we don't know how long this will continue, people should think what the right combination of parties is," said Yoshiro Mori, secretary-general of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

"A coalition should include the biggest party," he said.

Mr. Mori was speaking as parties were starting their

campaigns this week for the July 23 elections to the upper house, which is less powerful than the lower house.

However, lawmakers are aware the poll is the first at the national level since the LDP lost its grip on power in 1993, and will be the public's first direct judgement of the three-party coalition government.

Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama has said the coalition will receive a renewed mandate from the people if it maintains the 75 seats it holds out of the 126 at stake. But senior officials in his Socialist Party have said he should step down if the party is crushed.

When the coalition was formed a year ago, it was criticised as an unholy alliance of former enemies, intent on grabbing power without regard to principle. During the LDP's four-decade rule to 1993, the Socialists had opposed it fiercely.

The cabinet is also accused of being uneven. Although the LDP, the largest party in parliament, is the dominant force in policy making, Mr. Murayama is a Socialist.

Mr. Mori said coalition politics was good for the nation. "For a long time there was vicious opposition between the LDP and the Socialists," he said. "Now we

look for points in common." The parties have so far managed to patch up even their worst spats, including last month's row over the wording of a resolution to commemorate 50 years since the end of World War II, and have already lasted a year.

Wataru Kuso, secretary-general of the Socialist Party said the balance of power was a source of stability.

"If one party in the coalition became much larger than the others, the coalition would cease to function properly," he told a news conference. "The coalition government is becoming more and more like a single party."

S. Korean president sacks top aide after store collapse

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korean President Kim Young-Sam sacked his influential right-hand man Tuesday in a partial reshuffle of his ruling camp, battered by an election defeat and the tragic collapse of a shopping mall.

The presidential office said that Kim Duk-Ryong, secretary general of the ruling Democratic Liberal Party (DLP), was replaced by Kim Yoon-Hwan, minister for political affairs.

With hopes for new survivors quickly diminishing five days after the nation's worst peacetime disaster, rescuers Tuesday dug out six more bodies including the crushed body of a 10-year-old boy from the debris, raising the official death toll to 118.

But the number reported missing by relatives shot up to 393 Tuesday, some of them double-counted, relief

centre officials said. The disaster has left some 900 people injured, including 250 still in serious condition.

Political commentators predicted Tuesday's change would lead to a sweeping shake-up of the ruling camp to ease growing public anger triggered by the disastrous collapse of the plush five-storey Sampoong store Thursday.

The outgoing secretary general was accused of leading the ruling camp's campaign for last week's landmark local polls to a humiliating defeat.

The change coincided with a DLP caucus in which ruling party leaders voiced shock and concern about mounting public disillusionment with the Kim administration.

"The public are increasingly alienated from us," Yonhap News Agency

quoted DLP Chairman Lee Choon-Koo as saying as other ruling party leaders urged the government to win back public support by accelerating reforms.

As rescuers continued searching for survivors, helped by special military cameras, the U.S. military here announced a decision Tuesday to downscale its traditional July 4 celebration.

U.S. military spokesman Mike Sullivan said that an annual fireworks display had been cancelled, in consideration of the feelings of the Korean people.

Public sentiment here has mounted this week especially over the unchecked greed that permitted shoddy construction for extra profits — an attitude nurtured by the country's headlong rush for economic growth.

"The building's architect

should be held responsible," newly-elected Seoul Mayor Cho Soon told a cabinet meeting Tuesday, as newspapers detailed a litany of unsupervised alterations to the store, including moving support pillars.

The mayor also denounced disorderly rescue work, saying the government needs trained personnel and more equipment to cope with calamities.

At the meeting, the Home Ministry proposed a new "calamity control law" to upgrade the function of fire departments whose work was often hampered by lack of authority in the crucial phase of the rescue operations.

The chaotic state of Emergency Services was blamed on the loss of some lives which experts here said would have otherwise been saved.

Fighting threatens Russian, Chechen peace talks

MOSCOW (R) — Chechenya's peace talks were under threat Tuesday when Russia accused the rebels of violating a ceasefire and serious differences emerged over a political settlement in the breakaway region.

President Boris Yeltsin issued a decree for a permanent Russian army presence in Chechenya, signalling that Moscow does not see the territory becoming independent.

They were initiated by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin after Chechen gunmen raided the southern Russian town of Budennovsk last month and took hundreds of hostages.

Both sides have agreed on a truce and a tentative plan for disengagement. But sporadic fighting continued amid mutual accusations of ceasefire violations.

Top Chechen negotiator Usman Imaev told Ekho Moskvy radio station Monday that his side had been unable to keep its promise to destroy some of its heavy

weapons because of Russian bombing.

He said Russian planes had dropped 20 heavy bombs in the area where the weapons had been collected for destruction.

"In such a situation we consider it impossible to destroy the armour," Mr. Imaev said. "We might need it, though we do not want to use it."

Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev, widely accused of indiscriminate use of force in Russia's military campaign to quell Chechenya's independence drive, said Tuesday he hoped for a positive outcome of the talks.

But Gen. Grachev, who emerged unscathed from a political crisis in Moscow last week and appears to retain the confidence of Mr. Yeltsin, made clear he distanced himself from the peace efforts.

In remarks quoted by Interfax News Agency, he warned that the rebels could use the truce to regroup and prepare to attack.

Mr. Yeltsin's decree Tuesday for the Russian Armed Forces to stay in Chechenya effectively restored the legal status lost in 1992 when troops pulled out in the face of separatist pressure.

Arkady Volsky, deputy head of the Moscow delegation, said that during nearly four hours of talks early Monday Mr. Dudayev had offered to resign if Russia recognised Chechenya's sovereignty.

Mr. Volsky said he and Mr. Dudayev had discussed Moscow's proposed "zero option," under which Mr. Dudayev and the heads of the Moscow-installed Chechen government would resign to pave the way for elections later this year.

But Mr. Imaev told Ekho Moskvy radio the "zero option" had not been discussed at the talks. He also insisted Mr. Dudayev had made clear he had offered to quit in exchange for independence — something Moscow is sure to reject.

Thai alliance adds 7th party to form government

BANGKOK (AFP) — An alliance planning to form Thailand's next government added a seventh member Tuesday, as parties hammered out the distribution of portfolios amid reports of rivalry for key ministries.

"The new coalition will be a seven-party coalition," Banham Silpa-Archa, head of the alliance's leading party, Chart Thai, said outside his residence.

The addition of the Nam Thai Party, which won 18 seats in Sunday's elections, was "not to make parliament a dictatorship but to give stability to the government," Mr. Banham said. Chart Thai took the election with 92 seats.

The addition of Nam Thai to the alliance would give it a total of 233 seats, leaving the opposition, led by the Democrats of outgoing Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, with 158 seats.

Mr. Banham said that Nam Thai leader Anunay Viravan would be made a deputy prime minister charged with international economic affairs, but did not elaborate. He later said cabinet allocations would be announced Wednesday.

The powerful Interior Ministry appeared to be a stumbling block, claimed by three parties — Chart Thai, New Aspiration Party (NAP) with 57 seats and Palang Dharma (PDP) with 23 seats.

The business community was keeping an eye on appointments to crucial economic affairs positions, including the Finance Ministry, letting it be known that technocrats would be preferable to politicians.

Traders at the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) however, seemed confident, sending the index up 1.96 per cent, easily recouping Monday's 1.05-per cent drop attributed to post-election jitters.

"The emergence of a new coalition is more clear, and outsiders and non-MPs seem (likely) to control key ministries," Boonsom Kasapradit of Credit Lyonnais Securities said. "This gave a sentiment boost to the SET."

Alliance efforts received a welcome endorsement from army chief General Wirat Wongsawat, who said the military intended to respect the voters' choice, according to local press reports Tuesday.

In alliance negotiations, the PDP was insisting on taking charge of Bangkok's

tangled traffic problems, but so was Pracharakorn Thai, which won seats in the election. Both parties have a strong Bangkok base which expects action on traffic.

Pracharakorn Thai leader Samak Sundaravej worried businessmen when he said Monday that his party wanted to scrap an elevated train system already under construction and a planned expressway segment over a Muslim community.

On Monday, the six original alliance parties agreed to allot one portfolio, of minister or deputy minister rank, for each of 4.5 seats won. Debate on which portfolios would go to which parties continued late Tuesday.

The Bangkok Post commented Tuesday that the horse-trading indicated that holding political power "seems to remain more important to them than efficient government for the greater good of the country as a whole."

Mr. Banham has so far refused to name potential cabinet appointees, or to confirm whether he plans to include top aides who have been refused U.S. entry visas because of alleged links to

drug trafficking.

In Washington, U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said that the appointment of individuals denied U.S. visas on such grounds "obviously could complicate the bilateral relationship between Thailand and the U.S."

A member of the Chart Thai executive, Chaumpol Silpa-Archa, younger brother of Mr. Banham, said Tuesday that "any MP who won election should be treated with equal rights and legitimacy."

A government spokesman said Tuesday that a royal decree to convene parliament on July 10 had been drafted and submitted for royal approval.

Mr. Banham met briefly with the U.S. ambassador to Thailand Tuesday amid U.S. concern over cabinet appointments here.

Mr. Banham, accompanied by Anunay Viravan, leader of Nam Thai Party and member of a seven-party alliance with Chart Thai, arrived at a U.S. Independence Day celebration and spoke briefly with Ambassador David Lambertson.

Ghali urges steps to fight Africa's poverty

GENEVA (R) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali urged the world community Tuesday to give top priority to combating what he called the extreme poverty sweeping Africa.

Addressing a session of the U.N. Economic and Social Council, he proposed a plan including a boost in aid and urgent action to tackle the problem of African debt at a time when many states owe so much they can never hope to repay.

Dr. Ghali spoke against the backdrop of a new report by the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) showing how multinational investors who have flooded into the Third World over the past decade have largely — and it argues wrongly — spurned Africa.

The report, published Tuesday, said that while foreign direct investment (FDI) in developing countries has quadrupled since the mid-1980s, flows into Africa have remained stagnant, slashing the continent's share of FDI in the Third World from

more than 11 per cent to around five per cent.

The African continent, the U.N. chief said, "represents our most urgent priority in terms of the need for the solidarity of the international community."

Despite some hopeful economic signs — in 1995, the growth of total output on the continent reached its highest level in six years — "the current improvement in growth rates is still much too slight to compensate for the lag accumulated over 15 years of economic decline."

Last year, Dr. Ghali said, the U.N. General Assembly had added two more African countries to the list of least developed countries (LDCs) while only one graduated from that list, meaning that of 48 officially designated LDCs, 33 were African.

The U.N. chief set out several directions in which the world body should move in order to sustain the development of the countries of Africa:

— "The United Nations

must help Africa to strengthen its regional structures."

He called for strengthening cooperation with the Organisation of African Unity, and a greater readiness for the U.N.'s Economic Commission for Africa to step forward.

"The United Nations absolutely must help African countries to diversify their economies. Africa's products have to be allowed access to foreign markets. It must be fully recognised that Africa is the only region in the world that may be hurt by the Uruguay Round agreements."

— "The international community must 'decide at long last to take on the nagging problem of world debt.' The outstanding principle of Africa's long-term debt now amounted to \$37 billion, half the outstanding debt of the entire Third World. Only six of the continent's 21 most indebted nations could hope to pay off their debt, even under the softest terms."

— "The world community must not only maintain but

raise its level of assistance to Africa, the only developing region not to benefit from the recent rise in private capital flows."

A particular cause for alarm was the fact that the United States' share in total official development assistance to African countries fell from 17 per cent 10 years ago to 12 per cent in 1992-93, a reduction only balanced by a boost in the European Union's share, now 40 per cent of the total.

Dr. Ghali said the United Nations should help African countries to establish social institutions and back their efforts to improve public education and vocational training.

"Nothing will be possible for the international community... unless African men and women take their fate into their own hands," Dr. Ghali concluded.

"The United Nations must ask Africans themselves — all Africans — to become the driving force behind development efforts."

Cambodian army, rebels battle near Battambang

BATTAMBANG, Cambodia (AFP) — Khmer Rouge guerrillas and government troops were locked in fierce battle Tuesday, with the rebels seizing a key government outpost as they attempt to advance on Battambang, the country's second-largest city, military officials said.

Having fought to within 20 kilometres of the northwestern city of Battambang, the Khmer Rouge guerrillas pulled back, but have secured the last government position on the road to the rebels' major stronghold near the Thai border, military and police officials said Tuesday.

The fighting was described as "intense" with the rebels, supported by seven tanks, 82 millimetre mortars and 75 and 122 millimetre artillery, firing several anti-aircraft

guns captured from the army. Casualty figures were unclear from the fighting, which began early Monday. At least eight soldiers have been injured in hand-to-hand combat and four soldiers were listed as missing in action, according to officials in Battambang.

At least six civilians have also been injured, their wounds attributed to artillery shells, the officials said.

In addition, at least 1,000 villagers, who recently returned to nearby villages have fled again, and were taking temporary shelter behind government lines.

The rebels' northeasterly advance, began early Monday on either side of National Route 10 and at one point put them within 20 kilometres of

Battambang town before it was checked, the officials said.

While the 350 to 400 guerrillas have moved back from that position, they have captured the government outpost at Treng about 42 kilometres southwest of Battambang town, a senior military official in the village of Sdao about six kilometres away told AFP.

He said the Khmer Rouge were attacking the slopes of Phnom Sdao, a mountain just to the west of the village, and attempting to cut off government troops in between there and the front line.

In Battambang town itself, the deputy provincial police chief remained optimistic about the situation.

"The Khmer Rouge have not retreated but our forces

will not retreat either," said Chan Kosal. "We don't know how the situation will change tomorrow, but we think it will not worsen. Our soldiers are doing their jobs very well."

The Khmer Rouge captured Treng, a small collection of huts and military barracks along the road to the rebels' stronghold at Pailin, in early May and held it for a week before government reinforcements from other areas of the country arrived and helped to drive them out.

Reinforcements did not appear to be heading to the front line Monday or Tuesday, and stockpiles of weapons and ammunition stored near the Battambang airport seemed to be untouched.

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Features

In Gaza, the tale is of woe not misery

By G. H. Jansen

GAZA — Anyone who, at one time, may have admired Yasser Arafat, the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, and even referred to him as "Mr. Palestine," as this correspondent and many of his colleagues did should not go to Gaza, to see how the first Palestinian self-rule area is faring one year after Mr. Arafat's "return" to the Palestinian self-rule enclave.

Because in Gaza a visitor with any contact with the local people is overwhelmed by their endless stories of woe and misery, mostly caused by 27 years of neglect by the Israeli occupier, and by misgovernment and inefficiency, for which Mr. Arafat, as the supreme boss of the enclave, is directly responsible. But one does not expect the foreign occupier to be a beneficent ruler, and the Israelis certainly were not that. One does expect that the first Palestinian ruler of the first quasi-independent Palestinian area to make of it a model and an exemplar — which is a way it is — on how not to set about it.

Thus, the Israelis are responsible for the fact that there is no really safe drinking water in Gaza, because

the water supply is polluted. So those who can afford it drink bottled mineral water brought, at considerable expense, from Egypt. And the water supply is polluted because this city, or this large town of 350,000 has no underground sewage system: The untreated sewage either runs into the ground, directly or through septic tanks, or into the sea.

There are unpolluted water springs in the southern part of the Gaza Strip, and along the eastern, desert edge of the Strip, but that water is being pumped into the Israeli water system. And so far the self-rule authority, that is to say Mr. Arafat, has done nothing to regain this expropriated water for the citizens of Gaza to whom it rightly belongs.

The sewage going into the sea has killed off inshore fish and since the Israelis, for security reasons, do not allow Gaza fishermen to go more than nine miles from shore, what these fishermen do is go down the coast into Egyptian waters and there buy the catch, refrigerate it and then sell it in Gaza as their catch. And very nice fish it is too.

But it is Mr. Arafat and his ramshackle "authority" that must take the blame for the fact that tower blocks are now being built, one is 18 stories high, in or



Palestinians enjoy a day on the Gaza beach. The reopening of beaches is one of the limited benefits the self-rule and the PNA have brought to Gazans (AFP photo)

very near to the desperately poor run-down slums. Such buildings are in defiance of

a regulation that there should be no building of more than nine stories, but

for which Mr. Arafat himself signs special exemptions. And, what is more,

these high buildings too are not linked to any sewage system.

And who lives in these new tower blocks? The members of the "Authority," police or bureaucrats or rich individuals who can afford the rents. The housing situation in Gaza is very similar to that in Beirut, a lot of buildings but little or none of it for the basic infrastructure.

The Israelis are responsible for the fact that fruit and vegetables, of good quality, are cheap in Gaza because Israel blocks their export to their traditional market in Israel where they would compete with more expensive and lower quality Israeli produce. So one sees long lines of Gaza trucks, laden with fruit and vegetables, waiting at Israeli checkpoints for hours and days where the hot sun of summer spoils the produce. And, of course, Gaza farmers suffer from the low prices for which they are forced to sell. There is the same Israeli ban (for despite talk to the contrary, Israel still rules the roost in "self-rule" Gaza) on Gaza importing goods from Arab countries. So that, for instance, all cement which is badly needed for reconstruction, has to come from Israel even though it costs twice the price of cement from nearby Egypt.

The Israelis are also insisting that all Gazan im-

ports from abroad come through the Israeli port of Ashdod, and not through Egyptian ports. That means delays and extra expense: One international construction company in Gaza found that it took two days to bring in an empty container.

Despite their many complaints Gazans are unanimous in mentioning one positive advantage of self-rule: They no longer to put up with the sight of Israeli soldiers and curfew, some of which lasted for days on end, and no shooting of young men in the streets for throwing stones.

In particular, after 27 years, Gazans can now stroll or bask or play on the beach which, again for "security reasons," was forbidden to them under the occupation. But they are also discovering that swimming is dangerous because of the untreated sewage in the sea. Also, because of administrative corruption the Palestine Authority has allowed much of the beach to be fenced off from the public by new hotels, beach clubs and restaurants, which can afford the bribes. Thus, the proscribed freedom for Gazan families to stroll along the beaches in the cool of the evening does not compensate for the adverse aspects of the one-man rule of Yasser Arafat.

A capital in glory, a city in disgrace

By Sonya Ross and Mitchell Landsberg
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The buses rumble up to the Washington monument, one after another, discharging respectful tourists onto a green and ordered landscape. They have come to see the U.S. capital, reflecting the best of what the U.S. can be.

But the Washington they don't see is an affront to American ideals.

This is Washington, D.C., in 1995.

The police chief resigned, saying things were so bad that some officers couldn't file search warrants because they had run out of the proper forms.

Department of Public Works crews were reduced until only six workers were left to cut city-owned grass.

Near the U.S. Soldier's and Airmen's Home, weeds stand 1.5 metres high.

A study found 42 per cent of the city's black male population in prison or jail, on probation or parole or being sought.

Schools began late because of fire code violations and closed early to save money.

The district building, the equivalent of city hall, ran out of toilet paper after the supplier complained he wasn't being paid.

"Here we are the richest

country in the world, our nation's capital, our big D.C. budget of 3.2 billion (and we have) run out of toilet paper," lamented Mayor Marion Barry.

Four of the city's 15 dilapidated health clinics were closed due to lack of money at a time when the AIDS virus is spreading more quickly in Washington than any other major U.S. city.

At D.C. General Hospital, help of last resort for the poor, two of the three doctors treating AIDS patients resigned.

The hospital has occasionally run short of medicine and bandages, and had to lay off 41 doctors.

Trash has piled up for weeks in some neighbourhoods. Margaret Young, chairman of the Environment Committee of the Dupont Circle Citizens Association, says a park in her neighbourhood has "rat holes you could lose a small child down."

The city's Public Housing Agency and Foster Care Programme have been put under federal receivership. One judge said the city's children were in "great danger" under the city's child welfare programme.

"It's just a mess, a total mess," said Vivian Tisdall, 69, who spent most of her life teaching school here. "I'd move in a minute, if I could."

Washington veered so close to financial collapse this spring that a Democratic president and a Republican Congress stripped power from the city council and the mayor and established a board to take over the finances of the District of Columbia, which had been spending money it did not have.

Control boards have been imposed on other places, but this city is supposed to be a symbol of America at its best.

Washington still attracts the best and the brightest. Erica Gunn grew up in Dayton, Ohio, and moved here last September to join the Republican revolution in Congress. She had earned a master's degree in public policy, and now happily works 50-hour-plus weeks for the Senate Agriculture Committee.

She shares a house on Capitol Hill and loves it, although she is quick to note that she is an expert in martial arts and would not hesitate to use it.

"I like the fact that I can walk to work. I like the fact that I live on a block that is integrated, diverse. I like the fact that I can get good bakery bread a few blocks away."

And yes, she admits to a thrill at living amid so much history.

A beatific ambience permeates all four of Washington's corners. In the city's very poor south-

east quadrant, just beside a Roman Catholic church called Our Lady of Perpetual Help, a rolling, grassy hill juts between two thickets of trees.

Straight ahead is the Washington Monument. To the left is the Capitol, the seat of Congress. Up and to the right, like a lone king on a chess board, is the National Cathedral.

By day, you can stand next to the church with the chirps of birds in your ears.

By night, it's an area best avoided. The evening is punctuated by gunfire, regular as rain. Drunken, drugged or bored people linger on nearly every corner. Fat rats waddle into the street.

This hilltop is in anacostia, birthed in the proud heritage of freed slaves, home of the abolitionist Frederick Douglass. Now it is isolated and ignored by the rest of the city, practically a pariah community.

Problems that no control board can solve drag at Washington.

A sizable black middle class, once an anchor of stability, has been fleeing for the suburbs, leaving behind an overwhelmingly black underclass.

Crime has declined recently, but the drug culture and lawlessness still rule many neighbourhoods. In a recent five-month period, about 1,500 teenagers were arrested for crimes ranging

from homicide to car theft, causing the city council to vote to impose a youth curfew.

Even the mayor has a criminal record. Marion Barry was recently returned to office after a four-year hiatus, some of which was spent in prison on drug charges.

Mr. Barry was reelected with overwhelming support from blacks and very little from whites.

This is because Washington, the city, is predominantly black. Washington, the political capital, is predominantly white. The two cities share some traits — an allegiance to the Redskins American football team, an inability to work when it snows — but they often coexist without connecting.

The District of Columbia was laid out by a black surveyor and many leading figures in African-American history have been associated with Washington.

But black Washington is in decline. While other cities grapple with white flight, the strongest demographic trend here over the past two decades has been black flight.

In 1970, 71 per cent of Washington's 757,000 people were black. By 1990, the black population had declined by 140,000 — blacks now account for 66 per cent of the city's residents.

Evidence has been accumulating of a breakdown in everyday services.

The Rape Crisis Centre came within 24 hours of closing. Volunteers finally passed the hat to keep it open.

In the last year, 559 police officers quit. There have been fewer arrests since the pay cut took effect in May.

Thirty-eight school principals took early retirement or just left.

After a school security aide was convicted of sexually molesting two students, the city auditor found that 53 of the schools' 211 security people had police records.

Private schools to which the district sends children needing special education said the pupils would not be welcomed back because the city hadn't paid the tuition.

Along with crime, a constant factor in the exodus of middle-class blacks is talk of a conspiracy.

"The plan" goes like this: The district's financial problems are being used by whites to undermine, and eventually drive out, Washington's black local government and its majority black population.

These fears were reinforced this year when Jack Kemp, a former secretary of housing and urban development, suggested making the District of Columbia a tax-free zone to spur economic development and create jobs.

If Mr. Kemp prevails, city Councilman John Ray predicted, "In 10 years all the rich folks would be in Washington, D.C., and all the poor folks would be in the suburban areas."

Nowhere does "the plan" feel more real than in Anacostia, with its stunning view of the city and its cheap real estate. Here, the conspiracy endures because of historical precedent: Georgetown.

The same Georgetown homes that blacks once occupied now are white-owned and worth millions. Businessman Leo Bernstein, 79, who got rich buying Georgetown real estate, now advises friends to buy property in Anacostia.

Race also permeates talk of local government in Washington, where a white Congress once held all the power — and now effectively does again.

Until 20 years ago, the city was ruled by federal government commissioners. The district gained limited home rule in 1975. But Congress never gave up full control — it still can veto the city's budget and the acts of its government.

From the start, Washington's infant government was hit with spending responsibilities, including health care and other services, "without a large

enough tax base. The district operates under two enormous handicaps: Congress won't allow it to impose an income tax on commuters and 57 per cent of the real estate is owned by the federal government, embassies, universities, churches and the like — and thus tax-exempt.

The federal government pays 660 million this year in lieu of taxes, nearly 20 per cent of the city's 3.4 billion budget. But the payment, many people say, is arbitrary, patronising and insufficient.

Still, no one in Washington — not even Marion Barry — argues that the city has spent its money wisely. Tales of bureaucratic waste and inefficiency are part of D.C. lore.

For some, becoming the 51st U.S. state is the solution.

But statehood has no prospects. The district's fiscal crisis certainly isn't likely to persuade Congress that the city is ready to manage its own affairs.

If all else fails, it's clear the U.S. government isn't going to give up on Washington, D.C.

"It can't die," said Jack McLean, managing partner of the Greater Washington Initiative, who is paid to improve the image of metropolitan Washington. "It's the centre — not only of the region, but of the country — and they can't let it die."

PLO, Israel set July 25 for accord

(Continued from page 1)

a year behind the timetable laid down in the declaration of principles.

Mr. Arafat and Mr. Peres had failed in more than eight hours of talks overnight Saturday to hammer out a deal, thereby missing a July 1 deadline they had set last March.

"The two sides have agreed that the interim agreement will enable Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace and security," Mr. Arafat said.

Until now, the main disagreement remaining was on the extent of the West Bank pullout: The Palestinians want control of all Arab-populated areas there, while Israel demanded that troops remain in some towns and rural areas to protect the 110,000 Israelis living in settlements scattered throughout the territory.

On Monday, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said he was willing to withdraw troops in two stages from six of seven towns in the West Bank, and Mr. Peres said the army would also leave most West Bank villages.

Israel wants to keep control of the last remaining town of Hebron, where 450 Jews live amidst 110,000 Palestinians, during the in-

terim stage of Palestinian autonomy which is supposed to last until May 1999. The final status of the West Bank and Gaza has not yet been negotiated.

Israel TV reported that in Tuesday's meeting, the Israelis offered to let Palestinian police patrol the rural areas together with Israeli troops. That report could not be confirmed.

Mr. Peres said the details would now be worked out between Palestinian negotiator Ahmad Qouriea and Israeli negotiator Uri Savir.

Following is the full text of the Israel-PLO "understanding" read out in English by Mr. Arafat:

"Arafat and Peres announced today that after months of public and discreet negotiations and meetings between Rabin and Arafat and Peres an understanding has been reached on main aspects of the interim agreement — free and democratic elections for the Palestinian council and redeployment of the Israeli military forces in the West Bank and the transfer of civilian authority.

"Both sides agreed that the interim agreement would be fully based on the (1993) declaration of principles (for autonomy)."

"Israel, on the eve of the elections, will redeploy from

populated areas on the West Bank, elections will be held for the establishment of the Palestinian council.

"The two sides have agreed that the interim agreement will enable Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace and security.

"Arafat and Peres instructed their delegations, headed by (PLO Economy Minister Ahmad Qouriea) Abu Alaa and (Israeli foreign ministry director-general) Uri Savir, to enter into intense negotiations in order to finalise the interim agreement by July 25.

"Mr. Arafat and Mr. Peres covered among other issues the release of Palestinian prisoners held and detained in Israeli jails. It was agreed that the prisoners' gradual release will be arranged under the auspices of the (Israeli) ministerial committee formed for this purpose and will be included in the interim agreement.

"Both sides reaffirmed their desire to achieve a just

lasting and comprehensive peaceful settlement and that the interim agreement is an integral part of the whole peace process."

Mr. Arafat later told journalists security remained the main problem.

"We cannot say we have reached an agreement on security concepts, particularly in rural areas," he said.

"We insist that redeployment takes place in all towns and all areas, including Hebron. I insist on Hebron as a town and a region because there are rumours that Hebron will be excluded.

"We do not want Palestinian localities to be isolated enclaves, which would make life even more difficult for people."

He said it was impossible to hold elections unless the Palestinian police was in charge of security, "at least in populated areas of the West Bank."

"I cannot (say) there has been a great change in the Israeli attitude, but there is still room for negotiation," he added.

Gamaa claims foiled attack

(Continued from page 1)

conference Egypt should not fear going to the International Court of Justice in the Hague if it had proof of its claims over Halaib.

Three Sudanese policemen have been killed in two border clashes in the disputed Halaib area last week.

"In view of the escalation of the situation in Halaib and the exploitation by the Egyptian government of this problem whenever domestic problems erupt... we urge the Egyptian government to take this problem to arbitration and we would like the Egyptian government to respond positively," Mr. Atabani said.

"We announce in front of the whole world that there is no solution or a dignified, acceptable and just way out to this problem without arbitration," he said.

"We would like to go to the International Court of Justice because it has experience and well-known rules and traditions. But Egypt has to agree to go, as well."

The potentially oil-rich border area has been an issue of dispute between Sudan and Egypt since the 1950s.

Mr. Atabani, a senior member of the National Islamic Front — which is led by Sudan's spiritual mentor Hassan Al Tourabi — said on

Sunday Egypt was massing troops in and around Halaib prior to launching a military offensive to fully annex the area on the Red Sea border.

But he said on Tuesday Sudan did not favour military options to solve the dispute.

"Military options will not be successful to any party despite the strength of the Egyptian army, which has no one else but us to challenge after they solved their problem with Israel and could inflict huge losses on us," he said.

Last July, Sudan complained to the United Nations Security Council, accusing Cairo of avoiding talks on a peaceful settlement of their disagreements.

Sudanese President Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al Bashir has also said Sudan is prepared to put the Halaib dispute to the International Court of Justice.

Egypt has rejected such calls, maintaining it did not have to arbitrate over its land.

Mr. Sharif, the Egyptian information minister, told reporters on Tuesday: "Halaib is Egyptian and will always remain Egyptian and the agreements are clear in this respect and they (Sudan) have to respect these agreements."

Meanwhile, Egyptian judi-

cial sources said captured Gamaa militants have confessed to receiving arms from the National Islamic Front.

The four, seized as security forces found three arms caches in southern Egypt on June 24, told the state security court the front had "financed the purchase of these arms and explosives and their shipment from Sudan to Egypt," the sources said.

In another twist, Egypt cut the number of flights to Cairo by the Sudanese national airline to two a week from four and stopped direct flights between Port Sudan and the Egyptian capital.

Egypt also tried to defuse a row with Ethiopia by denying it had accused the Addis Ababa security forces of acting as accomplices in the assassination bid.

"There were no Egyptian statements condemning or indicating the involvement of the Ethiopian security forces," Mr. Sherif told reporters. "On the contrary an official Egyptian source said earlier that we were certain that the Ethiopian authorities were concerned to reveal the reality and that we respect the secrecy of investigations," he added.

Major wins party elections

(Continued from page 1)

"We have made our choice. It is a clear-cut choice, I believe, beyond any doubt whatsoever," Mr. Major said.

"It was the clear, absolutely conclusive result that the party was praying for," said Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind.

The fact that a third of his colleagues did not vote for him cast a cloud on Mr. Major's already fragile authority. Bill Cash, one of Mr. Major's prominent critics within the party, said it was only a starting point for healing party rifts.

"We've got to strive to find that common ground," Mr.

Cash said.

Tony Blair, leader of the opposition Labour Party, doubted that Conservatives could pull together.

"Mr. Major hasn't come out on one side or another of his divided party... that drift and that lack of direction will simply continue," Mr. Blair said.

Mr. Major's supporters shouted with delight and relief when the vote was announced. The party leader is automatically the prime minister and Mr. Major would have had to resign if he lost.

Mr. Redwood said Mr. Major "won fair and square under the rules, and I pay tribute to that victory."

Jordan recommended for offshore operations

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A London-based team of analysts and economists is recommending Jordan to international investors as a strongly potential country in the Middle East to set up offshore operations.

The recommendation was contained in the 1995/1996 Report of Offshore Financial Centres and Services (OFC) prepared by a team headed by Milton Grundy and published by Campden Publishing Company. The part on Jordan was presented by Michael T. Dabbitt and Thuraya H. Hudl, two Amman-based corporate attorneys.

The report is available by subscription only to worldwide readers.

Listing Jordan as an emerging centre for offshore companies, it says the Kingdom, with highly educated human resources, is "geographically and politically positioned to play an important role in offshore business."

"The constant determination of Jordan to promote an economic system which gives primacy to private initiative and emulation based on reasonable competition has allowed it to take the path of sustainable growth, thus remedying structural imbalances and attracting fore-

ign investment," it said in an introduction.

Jordan is a contrast to the typical image of a country which attracts offshore businesses with low taxation needs to low governmental budgets and limited natural resources and industrial base, it said.

"This image is not representative of Jordan since substantial legislative and regulatory changes have moved the country away from the idea of being a pure tax haven to being a more sophisticated environment," asserts the report.

Conceding that Jordan continues to face economic problems as a result of "underlying weaknesses" in the economy, the reports argue, however, that "the future seems promising, and Jordan is well-positioned to become a gateway for the West to the Middle East and may be poised for further economic expansion."

Offshore business facilities in Jordan will serve three key purposes, it said, listing them as:

— Attracting international capital resources and facilitating their transfer to the Jordanian economy;

— Allowing Jordanian banks to benefit from the experience and expertise of major international banks; and

— Stimulating the economies of the region by con-

tact with offshore services and contributing to the development of the countries in the region as a whole.

The legal structure in Jordan allows the operation of an offshore company as defined in the Companies Law No. 1 of 1989 and related regulations as "a public shareholding company of a partnership limited by shares or a limited liability company, which is registered in the Kingdom and carries out its operations outside the Kingdom."

The minimum capital for an offshore company offering insurance or banking services should not be less than JD 5 million, for a limited partnership JD 100,000 and a public shareholding company JD 500,000.

"Jordan has the highest standards of respectability, integrity and regulatory control," says the report. The Kingdom applies the following basic mandatory operating conditions for any offshore company:

— The company must not execute any of its work in Jordan;

— It must invest not less than five per cent of its capital in the Kingdom in Jordanian securities;

— It must have an actual permanent office in Jordan;

— It must keep accounting books and files for its financial management work in Jordan and for its over-

seas work;

— Half of its employees must be of Jordanian nationality;

— The board of directors may meet outside the country, but a copy of the minutes of the meeting should be sent to the controller of companies (failure to do so does, however, have no bearing on the legality of the meeting).

— The company should not raise capital from the local market and Jordanians cannot acquire shares in such companies through a public subscription in the local market.

Eight offshore companies have been registered in Amman, two of them in the insurance sector and the rest in trading.

"Jordan has the potential to rank first in the Near/Middle East region with the adoption of open trade policies, a long-term commitment to modernisation and a stable legal and regulatory environment," said the OFC report.

"Jordanian traders find political stability and peace with Israel to be the major pillars of a promising future for Jordan," it said. "Those using Jordan for transshipments contend that it is now the 'transit country.' After the peace treaty with Israel, Jordan will be strategically placed to link Asia with Europe...."

Gulf economy recovering in 1995

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Gulf Arab economies have started to recover and will likely register positive growth rates in 1995 after a decline caused by weak oil prices in the previous year, experts said on Tuesday.

As crude prices are expected to be nearly \$2 higher than in 1994, the oil sector in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) will reverse a downward trend while the private sector is also projected to grow.

But sharp cuts in government spending, mainly in Saudi Arabia, are expected to depress the public sector and offset growth in other sectors.

"The improvement in oil prices this year means a positive growth rate for the energy sector in the GCC and this positively affects the private sector," said Henry Azzam, chief economist at the Saudi National Commercial Bank.

"But the government sector will likely decline due to rationalisation of expenditure in most member states."

"However, the economic outlook for 1995 is generally better than in 1994 although

there will be no high growth rates in nominal terms," he told AFP by telephone from Jeddah.

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — produce around 13 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil, providing them with the bulk of their income.

A drop in crude prices to around \$15.5 a barrel in 1994 from \$16.33 in 1993 depressed their gross domestic product (GDP) in current prices to around \$198.3 billion from \$205 billion.

A breakdown showed most of them suffered from a downturn in nominal terms, with the Saudi GDP declining to around \$120 billion from \$121.9 billion. Kuwait's GDP dipped to around \$22 billion from \$24.3 billion and Qatar's to nearly \$6 billion from \$7.5 billion.

The UAE was the only exception, with the GDP growing to around \$36 billion from \$35.1 billion as the government has maintained spending.

Oil prices have largely recovered this year due to higher

world demand and compliance by most OPEC members with their production quotas.

The price of the North Sea Brent crude averaged around \$17.5 in the first half of 1995 compared with \$15.8 in the first half of 1994, an increase of more than 10 per cent, according to oil executives in the region.

While prices could weaken in the third quarter, they will be propped up again by stronger seasonal demand in the last quarter, executives said, adding the level was expected to average around \$17 for 1995.

Mr. Azzam said there were positive economic indicators in Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil producer and exporter, including a deal by the official airline Saudia to buy 60 aircraft for more than \$6 billion, a \$2.5 billion project to develop the giant Shabiyah oilfield and the approval of around \$1.65 billion for a power project.

He said the Saudi government had also earned around 5.5 billion riyals (\$1.46 billion) from bonds sales this year while a fall in interest

rates due to lower dollar rates enabled regional governments to increase borrowing and cut debt servicing.

"All these factors show there is more activity in the market and the economic situation is improving. But to be realistic, we should note that rationalisation of expenditure and other restructuring programme are casting their shadows on the economic situation," Mr. Azzam said.

GCC states cut spending to around \$68.7 billion in 1995 from \$71.4 billion in 1994 as they had assumed an oil price of around \$15 billion.

Economists said the actual 1995 deficit could be much lower if oil prices maintain their current level and member states did not hike expenditure.

"GCC economies will record positive growth rates in 1995 but at reasonable levels as oil prices have not increased sharply and the U.S. dollar has lost more than 20 per cent of its value against major world currencies," said Mohammad Al Asumi, chief economist at the Emirates Industrial Bank.

IFAD, ISESCO sign agreement

ROME — The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) Monday signed a cooperation agreement to help promote agricultural and rural development objectives in Islamic countries members of both organisations.

The agreement was signed at the fund's headquarters in Rome by Fawzi Al Sultan, president of IFAD and Dr. Abdulaziz Bin Othman Alkhatib, director-general of ISESCO.

ISESCO was established in Morocco in 1982, as a result of the third summit meeting of the Islamic Conference Organisation (ICO) held in Taef and Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in 1981. The organisation endeavours to enhance cooperation among its 40 member states in the fields of education, applied science and advanced technology as well as cultural exchange with a view to achieving peace, security

and progress.

The IFAD-ISESCO cooperation agreement lays the basis for mutual support and cooperation in programmes and activities related to agricultural and rural development which are of common interest to both organisations. The agreement underlines that closer cooperation will further the achievement of the objectives of both organisations particularly in promoting development objective the two organisations agreed on reciprocal representation, exchange of information, further discussions of joint activities and coordination in the fields of common interest.

During the signing ceremony President Sultan highlighted the excellent relations that have existed between IFAD and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) secretariat with whom a cooperation agreement was signed in 1983.

Key Arab shipping firm reports loss for third year

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) —

The biggest joint Arab shipping venture suffered losses in 1994 for the third year running due to a fall in freight caused by growing competition, the company announced here Monday.

But a series of readjustments in shipping rates slashed the 1994 loss of the United Arab Shipping Company (UASC) to nearly a quarter of the 1993 level, the company said.

The company said in a statement to AFP that it lost \$17.27 million in 1994, compared with \$73.12 million in 1993. It was the third year that UASC went into the red after a loss of around \$33

million in 1992.

This contrasted with 1991, when it made a record earnings of nearly \$60 million as it monopolised services in the region after other shipping firms were scared off by the Gulf war.

"The decline in operating income in 1994 was due to a fall in freight rates on regular lines and lower cargo the United States," said the report.

UASC, with an authorised capital of around \$1.7 billion, was set up in 1976 by Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE. Iraq's 19 per cent shareholding was frozen after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Palestinian firm in \$400m housing projects

AMMAN (R) — A company backed by Palestinian and Arab investors said on Tuesday it would start two construction projects worth \$400 million in self-ruled Gaza by early 1996.

"We hope to submit the tenders to contractors at the end of the year and to start construction early next year after detailed designs are completed," said Nabil Sarraf, chairman of the Palestine Real Estate Investment Com-

pany.

The \$22 million capital company, 49 per cent owned by the Palestinian Development and Investment Company (PADICO), was set up in 1994 with expatriate and local Palestinian and Arab capital.

The two housing complexes, the biggest yet in Gaza, will be built on land provided by the Palestinian authority, running the Gaza Strip and Jericho since May

1994 under the terms of a 1993 peace accord between Israel and the PLO.

Construction will be phased over the next few years, Mr. Sarraf told Reuters.

Palestine Liberation Organisation chief Yasser Arafat, who was briefed on the project this weekend, gave his approval to allocate the two plots of land.

A final accord with the Palestinian authority on profit sharing and joint development of the plan is expected to be completed this week, Mr. Sarraf added.

The first project is a medium-high income 2,400 unit complex in the Mashtal coastal area in northern Gaza on a 300,000 square metre site. It will cost some \$300 million and include a 360 room hotel, multipurpose hall and marina club.

Personal incomes drop; spending rises in U.S.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans' income in May slipped for the first time in a year, and a drop in construction spending was the steepest in four years.

But analysts said Monday's gloomy pre-holiday reports — just two days before a key Federal Reserve meeting on interest rates — suggest anemic growth and not a recession. They also noted that consumer spending was surprisingly strong in May.

brightening the generally pessimistic picture.

The U.S. Commerce Department said personal income fell 0.2 per cent in May, the first decline since a 0.6 per cent drop in January 1994. Income rose a mere 0.1 per cent in April.

But spending, which has slowed dramatically in 1995 from last year's booming pace, rose a strong 0.7 per cent after a tepid 0.1 per cent gain in April. Consumer

spending accounts for two-thirds of the nation's economic activity.

The government also reported that construction spending fell 1.5 per cent in May, its second straight decline and the biggest drop since May 1991. Construction spending was \$514.7 billion at a seasonally adjusted annual rate, the lowest since August, when it was \$509.9 billion.

Spending on single-family homes dropped 2.5 per cent

to \$136.9 billion on top of a 2.3 per cent dip in April. The May total is the lowest since September 1993, when it was \$136 billion.

Analysts said most signs point to a sluggish economy but predicted a recession would be avoided.

"The basic picture is that the economy has stalled out. It's declining modestly or near zero," said economist Laurence Meyer, who runs a St. Louis forecasting service.

"The question we're trying to answer is whether it will turn into a recession or stop short of zero," said Cynthia Latta of Dri-McGraw Hill, a forecasting firm in Lexington, Mass. There is a good chance for a modest recovery in the latter part of the year, she said.

Stocks rose in later trading in a session abbreviated by the July 4 holiday. The Dow Jones industrial average closed up 29.05 points to

4585.15.

The Federal Reserve, which boosted interest rates seven times during a one-year stretch concluded Feb. 1, is believed by many to be on the verge of changing course and cutting rates.

The Central Bank's policy-making federal open market committee meets Wednesday and Thursday to determine whether the slowdown is severe enough to warrant trimming rates now.

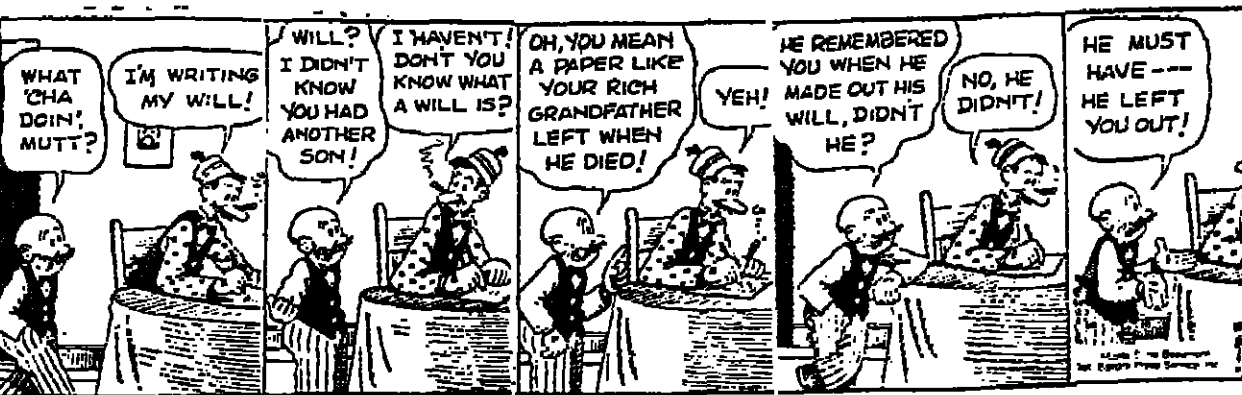
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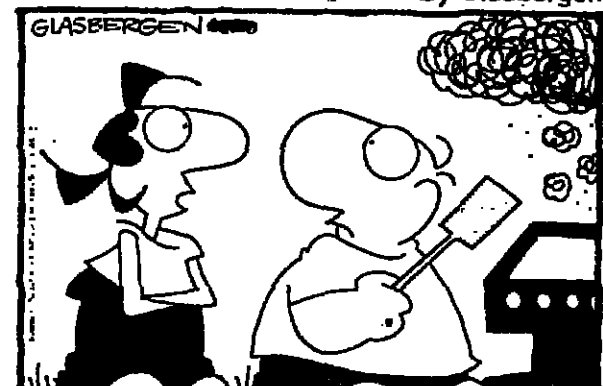
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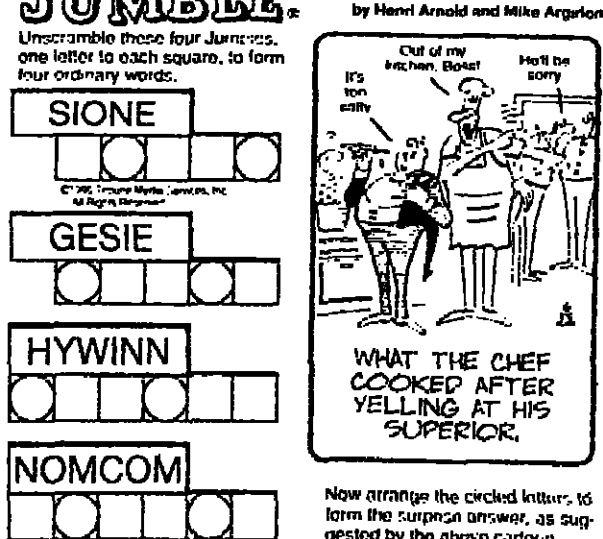
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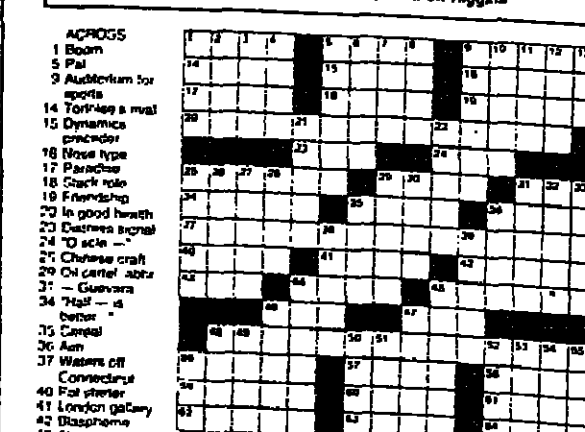
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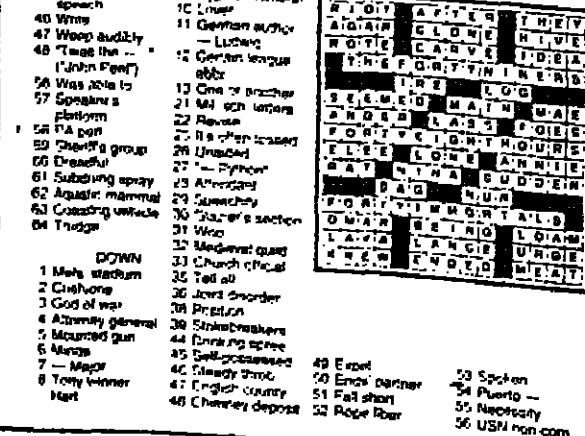
JUMBLE



THE Daily Crossword



Monday's Puzzle solved:



Business Daily Beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Bouncing cheques on the rise

The number of bouncing cheques during the first four months of 1995 rose by 5.1 per cent over the same period in 1994. The number of bouncing cheques in the period totalled 147,500, with a total value of about JD 135.4 million compared to 140,400 cheques with a total value of JD 120.3 million in the same period of 1994. This reflected a 12.52 increase in the value of bouncing cheques in 1995. The highest number of bouncing cheques was recorded in January which witnessed 43,000 cases of bouncing cheques with a value was JD 37.2 million. An official source attributed the rise in the number of bouncing cheques in the trade movement, which has already been suffering a deep recession for the past two years. The source said most merchants issue cheques based on speculations of future flow of cash. Bouncing cheques in 1994 totalled 435,000 worth JD 372.1 million, reflecting an increase of 30 per cent over the year before (Al Ra'i).

**** THE JORDAN Agricultural Marketing and Processing Company** received 26,600 tonnes of tomatoes from Jordan Valley farmers since the beginning of the tomato season in May, company Director General Khaldoun Al Nasser said. Mr. Nasser said the company paid the farmers JD 970,000 for the amount (Al Ra'i).

**** Jordan and the European Investment Bank (EIB)** signed three agreements under which the Kingdom will receive loans worth 38 million European currency units (ECUs) (\$45 million) to finance several development projects. Under the agreements, 20 million ECUs will be presented to the Jordan Electricity Company to enhance the electricity generation power in the Greater Amman area, 13 million ECUs to the Ministry of Water and Irrigation to be used in carrying out water and sewerage network projects in Amman, Zarqa, Irbid, Souf, Mahes and Fubeis and five million ECUs to the Ministry of Water and Irrigation to repair water networks in Mafraq and Ajloun (Al Ra'i).

**** The Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company** will import in the next few days about 100,000 new gas cylinders. Company sources said that this amount, in addition to the output from the local factory producing cylinders will be enough to meet the entire local market needs (Al Ra'i).

**** The 35 Jordanian companies** which took part in the International Moscow Fair recently succeeded in concluding JD 2 million deals with Russian companies. (Al Dustour)

Saudi five-year plan to cut state dominance

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia's government has approved an ambitious plan for the next five years to reduce dependence on oil and slash subsidies in an economy that has so far been largely state-driven.

The cabinet on Monday night approved the six-year economic plan for Muslim calendar years 1415 to 1420 (1995-2000), which also aims to enhance the role of the private sector, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said.

A draft of the plan obtained by Reuters earlier showed its priorities reflect the kingdom's pledge to balance revenues and expenditure and largely eliminate subsidies for the years 1995 to 2000.

It said priorities included rationalising "government expenditure and (making) the national economy more dependent on private sector activities."

It said Saudi Arabia intended to "reduce dependence on the production and export of crude oil as the main source of national income."

SPA quoted Planning Minister Abdul-Wafab Bin Abdul-Salam Attar as saying the plan "will work for increasing the contribution of the private sector in making

the base of the economy to lessen dependence on oil revenue."

The draft also says the government should reduce production costs of public services and utilities and rationalise the system of direct and indirect subsidies provided by the state.

Saudi Arabia, which has been running budget deficits since 1982, exports about seven million of its eight million barrel per day oil production. It has already cut subsidies to farmers and raised prices on utilities from power to water.

The world's largest oil ex-

porter and producer recorded a \$10.7 billion deficit in 1994 mainly due to weak oil prices despite cutting the budget by 20 per cent.

The current \$40 billion budget carries a \$4 billion deficit which official sources expect to be wiped out by the end of the year if oil prices remain higher than forecast in the budget.

The 1995 budget projected oil income at about \$33 billion out of total 1995 revenues forecast at \$36 billion. The kingdom has earned about \$2.3 billion above forecast oil revenue in the first five months of 1995, economic sources told Reuters.

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The world's largest oil ex-

Israeli high-tech export zone snagged by red tape

TEL AVIV (R) — Three years ago, 20 of the top Jewish businessmen in the United States made Israel an offer few countries could refuse.

They would fund construction of a low-tax, high-tech export zone on 250 hectares in Israel's southern Negev Desert. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin gave the go-ahead for the project, expected to create 20,000 new jobs.

But the Israeli Free Processing Zone, aimed at funneling foreign investment into the Jewish state, has run into what entrepreneurs had thought was a relic of its past — thick government red tape.

A tender for the zone has yet to be issued and 20 per cent of the companies which had agreed to operate under the original investor group have already backed out, project organisers say.

"The politicians are talking about eliminating the bureaucracy, but nothing changes on the ground," said David Yerushalmi, an American-Israeli who heads the original investor group. Mr. Yerushalmi cited a 31 per cent drop to \$519 million

in net foreign investment in Israel last year, compared with \$751 million in 1993, as proof that Israel is still inhospitable to foreign companies.

His Israel Export Development Company (IEDC) has already invested \$7 million in marketing the zone.

"The fact of the matter is that the companies we had lined up are finding other countries and other zones to move. The world won't wait for Israel," he said.

Sprint International, Electronic Data Systems, Lotus Development Corporation, Petro Systems Corporation, Deloitte and Touche Accounting and the German Firm Factor are among companies which are interested in operating in the zone, Mr. Yerushalmi said.

He would not name the firms which have pulled out. IEDC investors who intend to fund the zone's construction include U.S. real estate magnates Larry Silverstein and Robert Tishman, CBS's (Larry Tisch, home depot founder Bernie Marcus, investor Michael Steinhardt and Sy Syms of Syms Clothing.

Mr. Yerushalmi said publication of the tender had been delayed by mid-level bureaucrats from government agencies who offered no explanation for their objections to the zone. He said their frequent complaints have taken weeks to resolve.

The zone, to be run by an autonomous council, will draw on Israel's highly-educated labour pool. It is planned as a haven from the notoriously high taxes and dense bureaucracy that have been Israel's chief barriers to attracting foreign firms.

Companies operating in the zone are to be subject to only a 15 per cent flat tax on profits taken out of Israel.

Part of the delay has stemmed from a lawsuit filed last March by residents of Omer, a town near the zone site. They say the area will harm the environment and contest planning procedures. The lawsuit is expected by August.

A spokesman for the finance ministry, which is overseeing the zone's creation, said the bureaucratic difficulties were simply the growing pains of a new, more open Israeli economy.

"It takes a bit more time

than we thought," explained Boaz Roday, an adviser to finance Minister Abraham Shohat. "We don't have the zone yet, that's why we have the bureaucracy."

Mr. Roday said a tender for the zone would be issued as soon as the lawsuit was settled.

Anxious investors, counting lost revenues from the delays, predict that once the zone finally gets going, it will generate \$1 billion in revenues in its first eight years.

The group which wins development rights will finance construction of the area's infrastructure and assume responsibility for attracting companies to operate in its 1.4 million square metres of work space.

At least three companies, including Mr. Yerushalmi's and another led by Israelis, are preparing to bid for development rights, a project official said.

Mr. Yerushalmi said that under his group's plan, most goods produced in the zone would be sold in European and U.S. markets. Potential products include research and development, telemedicine and digital processing.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN, JORDAN				
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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 04/07/1995				
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
BANKS SECTOR				
ARAB BANK PIC	440	96170	219.500	218.500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	12139	55419	4.570	4.550
BANK OF JORDAN	1700	5532	3.200	3.230
JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	1000	1355	1.360	1.360
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	474	1217	2.560	2.570
THE HOUSING BANK	2150	17523	8.200	8.150
JORDAN KUMAT BANK	470	1232	2.600	2.630
JORDAN COLTY BANK	11000	14229	1.310	1.300
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	250	988	4.000	3.950
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	2154	8097	3.780	3.760
BUSINESS BANK	1000	3950	3.950	3.950
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	1041	4422	4.290	4.250
REIT ELAL SAVINGS INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	1600	6028	3.720	3.790
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	23250	26345	1.140	1.140
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	11700	19394	1.670	1.660
BANKS SECTOR	70368	262196	INDEX NUMBER: 181.11	CHANGE: +0.385
INSURANCE SECTOR				
JORDAN INSURANCE	2041	6647	3.260	3.260
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	350	915	2.600	2.630
YARMOUK INSURANCE & REINSURANCE	1100	3586	3.100	3.260
ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	250	650	2.600	2.600
INSURANCE SECTOR	3799	12038	INDEX NUMBER: 135.51	CHANGE: +0.472
SERVICES SECTOR				
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	19416	33666	1.730	1.740
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	150	878	5.850	5.850
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	13650	38595	2.800	2.820
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	6085	14582	2.350	2.400
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	3000	3060	1.050	1.020
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	4280	5097	1.170	1.200
HIGHWAY EQUIP. RENTING & MAINTENANCE	500	335	6.60	6.70
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORE HOTELS	83000	190089	2.290	2.300
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	2350	7926	3.360	3.370
JORDANIAN EXHIBITION INVESTMENT HOLDING	1000	1280	1.250	1.280
SERVICES SECTOR	133431	295503	INDEX NUMBER: 132.75	CHANGE: +0.472
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR				
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	3818	14508	3.820	3.800
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	3050	9315	3.080	3.040
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	1591	16616	10.470	10.420
JORDAN TANNING	1500	1253	2.480	2.500
THE JORDAN INDUSTRIAL & AGRICULTURAL	1037	3522	3.400	3.390
THE JORDAN WORSTED MILLS	800	6361	8.000	7.950
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	14537	73122	5.030	5.030
JORDAN CEMENT INDUSTRIES	1000	6600	6.000	6.000
JORDAN OIL	1000	2400	2.400	2.400
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	1850	4866	2.640	2.630
JORDAN PAPER & CARDBOARD FACTORIES	300	1140	3.800	3.800
RAPIA INDUSTRIES	500	1253	2.480	2.500
DAIR AL DANA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	200	1573	7.870	7.870
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	532	404	7.70	7.60
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	1711	9872	5.760	5.770
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	54204	54204	5.50	5.50
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	3300	4620	1.410	1.400
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	5448	6533	1.210	1.200
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	2500	5770	2.350	2.300
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JIMCO	150	95	2.400	2.400
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	700	1592	2.240	2.300
KANTHER INVESTMENT	150	225	1.550	1.500
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	500	1825	3.270	3.250
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	8004	17879	2.200	2.200
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	7517	14863	1.950	1.980
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	160161	260254	INDEX NUMBER: 131.85	CHANGE: +0.402
GRAND TOTAL	367759	829991	INDEX NUMBER: 156.73	CHANGE: +0.402
NO. OF ORDER SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET : 213887				
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET : 217979				

Financial Markets

Jordan Times in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank			
U.S. Dollar in International Markets			
Currency	New York Close 4/7/95	Tokyo Close 4/7/95	
Sterling Pound	1.4013	1.3950**	
Deutsche Mark	1.3880	1.3796	
Swiss Franc	1.1460	1.1479**	
French Franc	4.8360	4.8307**	
Japanese Yen	84.79	84.63	
European Currency Unit	1.3543	1.3544**	

Eurocurrency Interest Rates			
Date: 4/7/1995			
Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS 12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.81	5.75	5.68 5.68
Sterling Pound	6.43	6.75	6.93 7.31
Deutsche Mark	4.37	4.37	4.37 4.50
Swiss Franc	2.87	2.87	3.00 3.12
French Franc	6.55	6.78	6.50 6.42
Japanese Yen	1.04	0.93	0.81 0.81
European Currency Unit	6.04	6.04	6.19 6.38

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin			
Date: 4/7/1995			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
U.S. Dollar	0.6920	0.6940	
Sterling Pound	1.1042	1.1097	
Deutsche Mark	0.5013	0.5038	
Swiss Franc	0.6033	0.6065	
French Franc	0.1431	0.1438	
Japanese Yen	0.0170	0.0211	
Dutch Guilder	0.4477	0.4499	
Swedish Krona	*****	*****	
Italian Lira	0.0426	0.0428	
Belgian Franc	*****	*****	

Other Currencies			
Date: 4/7/1995			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
Bahraini Dinar	1.8190	1.8320	
Lebanese Lira	0.041935	0.042965	
Saudi Riyal	0.1844	0.1859	
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3000	2.3020	
Qatari Riyal	0.1849	0.1902	
Egyptian Pound	0.1900	0.2160	
Omani Riyal	1.7888	1.7970	
Cypriot Pound	1.4875	1.5723	

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.3714/24	Canadian dollar	1.3796/06
	1.5454/64	Deutschmarks	1.1468/78
	28.36/40	Dutch guilders	4.8340/90
	1619.2/4.2	Swiss francs	84.62/72
	7.2250/50	Belgian francs	6.1470/20
	5.3873/25	French francs	5.3873/25
	\$1.5928/38	Japanese yen	\$384.45/384.75
One sterling		Swedish crowns	
One ounce of gold		Norwegian crowns	
		Danish crowns	

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Olajuwon is in Amman

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — NBA superstar Hakeem Olajuwon "the dream" Olajuwon is now in Amman, and basketball fans cannot wait to see the world's best player display some of his skills in the Jordanian capital.

At a press conference Tuesday, Olajuwon said he was on his way to Saudi Arabia to perform the Umra pilgrimage and said Amman would be yearly stopover for him as he intended to make it a yearly trip.

"I am very happy to be in Jordan, it is a beautiful country. The people are wonderful and I plan to come here next year too. I'm having a great vacation."

Asked about how he became the world's top player, Olajuwon said: "I have accomplished a lot in the U.S. I believe Islam, as a way of life, enabled me to have a better understanding of everything. It took my game to another level. I'm happy with my life."

Olajuwon who led the Houston Rockets to their second straight NBA title this year with 4-0 win over Orlando Magic said he hoped to assist Jordanian basketball in his future trips. But he did not confirm if he would be playing in Amman this time although informed sources told the Jordan Times the superstar might appear in a charity exhibition on Thursday or Friday.



Hakeem Olajuwon #34 of the Houston Rockets in NBA action earlier this year (AFP photo)

Born in Lagos, Nigeria, Olajuwon left for the U.S. in 1983 and excelled in college basketball with teammate Clyde Drexler.

Olajuwon transformed the Houston Rockets 1992-93 worst ever team to an NBA finalist in just his second season after being drafted in 1984 by the Houston Rockets and was runner-up to Michael Jor-

dan for rookie of the year. He led the NBA in rebounds and blocked shots in the 1989-90 season and played his seventh consecutive NBA all-star game in 1991. In 1992 he was runner-up to Charles Barkley of the Phoenix Suns for the title of Most Valuable Player (MVP). He was named NBA MVP in 1994 and also in the recently concluded 1995 season.

Australian authorities deny Olympic pollution claims

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australian authorities Tuesday rejected an environmentalists' claims that they faced toxic clean up problems at the site of the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000.

Sydney plans to host the "Green Games" at Homebush Bay, 14 kilometres west of the city centre, by cleaning up a former industrial area that once housed a naval armaments depot, abattoir and brickworks quarry.

But Kate Short, a member of the committee which drew up environmental guidelines for the Games, said the size of the problem could cause a blowout in costs for the state government of New South Wales.

Short told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation television that the scale of

toxicity in Homebush Bay, around two kilometres from the Games site, and around the proposed Olympic village had been covered up.

Michael Knight, Olympics minister in the state government, summoned international news agencies to a special briefing to deny the television report's claims.

He agreed that sediment in the bay itself was contaminated with dioxins from a former Union Carbide plant, but noted the bay was "a considerable distance" from Olympic venues and the government had acknowledged the problem in 1988.

The state government had embarked on a one million Australian dollar (\$710,000) study to investigate remedying the situation, he said, although there were "no

great solutions" known of in the world.

"In a broad environmental perspective it would be preferable for it (the bay) to be fixed, (but) it is not central to the Olympics, it poses no threat to the athletes or to spectators," Knight said.

He said the dioxins, highly toxic chemicals, posed a risk only to fish and those who ate them.

Knight said the clean-up of Olympic Park where athletes would compete was almost finished and had been achieved under budget at a cost of \$46.5 million.

Contaminated land on the 260-hectare (642-acre) site of the Olympic village, which would be sold as homes after the Games, would be cleaned up with a budget of \$58 million, he added.

Asked whether reports of contamination might affect the market price of the Olympic village homes and put a hole in the state's Games budget, Knight replied: "No, not at all, not at all."

"In fact, private industry who have been dealing with it are very relaxed, we have been quite upfront with them about the whole situation and, in the end, this will literally be better than new."

Wilson Park, a fenced off area near the Olympic site that was polluted with gasworks waste buried underground, was not part of the site and would also be cleaned up before 2000, he added.

Short told the television programme, screened Thursday, that people were not fully be level of contamina-

tion in what had been billed as a Green Olympics.

"I still think that there is a commitment from the Olympic people for the Green Games, but I don't think there's enough of an understanding about the extent of toxic chemical pollution and the cost of remediation," she said.

"That has all been completely swept under the carpet."

But Knight said the state government had been open. "There was no deception in terms of bid documents, no deception in terms of the IOC (International Olympic Committee), in fact one of the cornerstones of our bid was that we were turning an environmental wasteland into a magnificent sporting and recreational facility," he said.

Sanchez Vicario reaches semifinals for first time

WIMBLEDON (AP) — Arantxa Sanchez Vicario reached her first Wimbledon semifinal Tuesday with a 6-4, 7-6 (7-4) victory over Brenda Shultz-McCarthy.

The second-seeded Spaniard was down a break in both sets against the 15th-seeded Dutchwoman but rallied to win each time.

The tiebreaker went with serve until Shultz-McCarthy missed a volley to give Sanchez Vicario a 6-4 lead. The match ended on the next point with another error by Shultz-McCarthy.

The victory marked a breakthrough for Sanchez Vicario, who had failed to progress past the quarterfinals in eight previous Wimbledon appearances. She reached the quarters three times, in 1989, 1991 and 1995.

Sanchez Vicario will face the winner of the quarterfinal match between defending champion Conchita Martinez and Gabriela Sabatini.

In later matches, top-seeded and five-time champion Steffi Graf was set to face No. 13 Mary Joe Fernandez, with No. 4 Jana Novotna playing No. 6 Kimiko Date — the first Japanese woman ever to reach the Wimbledon quarterfinals.

The men's quarterfinals are set for Wednesday. Two-time defending champion Pete Sampras will face Shuzo Matsuoka, the first Japanese man to progress this far at a Grand Slam event since Jiro Sato reached the Wimbledon semifinals in 1936.

The other matches are: Top-seeded Andre Agassi against Jacco Eltingh, No. 3 Boris Becker vs. Cedric Pioline, and No. 4 Goran Ivanisevic against No. 6 Yevgeny Kafelnikov.

Meanwhile, American doubles star Murphy Jensen telephoned relatives Tuesday to say he was safe and well, a day after he failed to show up for a mixed doubles match and disappeared without explanation.

His mother, Patricia, and brother, Luke, said he had telephoned his sister in Atlanta to say he was in London and was fine. They said they still did not know his exact whereabouts or the circumstances of his disappearance.

"We're not sure why he did it," Luke Jensen said. "I'm very relieved. It wasn't any kind of kidnapping or any kind of physical accident."

On Monday, Sampras posted a 6-4, 6-3, 7-5 victory over Greg Rusedski, who flashed his toothy grin throughout the match.

While Rusedski tried his best to engage the crowd, Sampras never wavered from his serious demeanor as he went about winning his 18th consecutive match at Wimbledon to reach the quarterfinals.

"I was trying to wipe the smile off his face," Sampras said.

To which Rusedski replied: "I'm sorry to say he's never going to wipe that smile off my face, no matter what."

"I'm going to have fun out there," he said. "It doesn't matter. If Pete's not going to want to smile or show his



Arantxa Sanchez Vicario

emotions, that's fine by me." The Canadian-born Rusedski, who switched his allegiance to Britain in May, instantly became the No. 1 player and crowd favourite in a country that hasn't had a Wimbledon men's champion since 1936.

"The people have been so wonderful and given so much to me these past few weeks," he said. "Every match had something special for me. It was just so great."

"Even to play Sampras today, to lose in three sets, was a dream match for me. I now know how it feels to play probably the best grass-court player in our generation on Centre Court. It's just been a wonderful experience, everything."

Rusedski said Sampras — who broke the Canadian-Britain four times while never losing his own serve — "wanted to prove something today."

Sampras wouldn't say it, but he all but admitted that he was eager to put Rusedski in his place.

He tugged his cap over his face, smiled wryly and declined to comment when asked whether players thought Rusedski "was getting a bit big for his britches."

Sampras found plenty to fault in Rusedski's game.

"I think there are some errors in his game that he might have to improve," he said. "He's obviously got a big serve, but if you get it back, he's pretty average. He doesn't really return that well. He's got some time to improve, but he has a couple of holes in his game."

Wimbledon-notebook

Agassi's see-through shorts: Andre Agassi, who has been quizzed on seemingly every detail about his relationship with Brooke Shields, found himself discussing a new topic Monday: His shorts.

"I know this is a personal question," a female journalist asked after top-seeded American's 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 victory over Alexander Mronz, "but are you aware that your shorts are slightly transparent?"

"Am I aware of that?" Agassi deadpanned.

"Yeah?" she replied.

"No," Agassi said, "but apparently you are."

It took a while for the laughter to die down, but another journalist — this time a man — decided to press on.

"Would you worry if they were?" he asked.

"Apparently they are," Agassi said. "And I don't seem too concerned."

More Andre: Never one to miss a promotional opportunity, Andre Agassi performed his own bit of fashion designing before his match Monday.

Before warming up with coach Brad Gilbert, Agassi went over to Gilbert's son, Zachary, and meticulously fitted one of his new, Nike-swoosh "do-rags" on the 6-year-old boy's head.

Zachary wore the white bandana throughout Agassi's victory as he watched the match from the centre court guest box, cradled in his father's lap.

Those who can't get enough of Agassi trivia might be interested to know that his girlfriend, Brooke Shields, and Gilbert's wife, Kim, relaxed after the match with a snack of tea and scones in the players' cafeteria.

Easy decisions: Having captured the hearts of British fans with three victories before a valiant defeat to Pete Sampras, Montreal-born Greg Rusedski was named to his adopted country's victory-starved Davis Cup team for next week's match against Monaco.

The July 14-16 relegation

match will be the Davis Cup debut for Rusedski, labeled a mercenary by some in the tennis community after being granted permission to play for Britain two months ago by the international tennis federation.

"After what he's done this week, I think we should just forget where he comes from, put 'GB' after his name, and feel lucky we've got a top 60 player," British captain David Lloyd said.

Rusedski's change of allegiance upset many British players, notably Chris Wilkinson, who was left off the team after saying he would not play with Rusedski.

Britain has lost six consecutive Davis Cup matches, and defeat to Monaco would sink the country to Euro-African Zone Group Three — the lowest possible level in the competition.

Joining Rusedski on the team are 122nd-ranked Mark Peckey, 174th-ranked Tim Henman and unranked doubles specialist Neil Broad.

Norman's conquest ends: Dick Norman's streak of victories over Wimbledon champions came to an end when he ran into three-time titlist Boris Becker.

The 6-foot-8 (2.04 metre) Belgian had ousted 1987 champion Pat Cash, Stefan Edberg, the 1988 and '90 titlist, and 1994 doubles champion Todd Woodbridge on the way to last 16.

But he couldn't handle Becker's booming serve as the third seeded German, who won the title in 1985, '86 and '89, sent down 17 aces on the way to a 7-6 (8-6), 6-3, 6-4 victory.

Rising stars: For the first time in Wimbledon history, there are Japanese players in contention in both the men's and women's quarterfinals at Wimbledon. It could be a sign of things to come.

"There are many more talented guys in Asia," said

Shuzo Matsuoka after his 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 victory over American Michael Joyce.

Matsuoka, the first Japanese man since Jiro Sato in 1933 to advance to the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam event, will likely get his wish for a match on one of the major show courts. His next opponent is two-time defending champion Pete Sampras.

Meanwhile, sixth-seeded Kimiko Date became the first Japanese woman ever to advance to the Wimbledon quarterfinals when she beat Mariaan De Swardt of South Africa 6-1, 2-6, 6-2.

Hollywood has twice come to Wimbledon — even if mercenary Romanian Lieke Martens refused to lose on camera.

In 1967, Rod Taylor and Christopher Plummer took to Wimbledon for action in the Royal Box for "nobody runs forever."

In 1978, it was the turn of "the players" starring Dino Martin, son of crooner Dean Martin, and Ali McGraw.

Among the real players participating in the picture, Nastase was true to form. His pride was too great to admit defeat. He settled for "retired hurt" when knocked out of the fictional tournament.

Martin's master: Tennis coaches are not supposed to beat their pupils so it was a bit surprising when Todd Martin, Wimbledon semi-finalist last year, admitted that coach Robert Van't Hof soundly thrashed him every night.

But the bearded American was not talking about tennis, but about his latest craze, bridge.

"I play with Dean Goldfine, Patrick Galbraith's coach, against Robert and Patrick, and they beat us every time," says Martin.

"But Robert can't play cards very long against me. He says he sees too much of me as it is."

Women's Basketball

Al Jala' win 1st match

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's women's basketball team Monday lost their first match 69-51 to Syrian champions Al Jala' who are on a week-long visit to the Kingdom.

The Kingdom's team were playing their first official match after being regrouped earlier this year. However they clearly demonstrated the ill-effects of the women's national team's 12-year absence from the basketball scene. Al Jala's coherent lineup took the first half 38-22, but the Jordanian team made a good comeback in the second half which they lost 31-29, therefore losing the match on the score difference Al Jala' built in the first half.

While Al Jala' depended on Kareem Abdulnour and Eto Mouradian, Jordan's Jumana Salti carried the burden of scoring and rebounding capping a perfect match with 28 points. Syria's Karla Maghamez scored 20 for her team followed by Abdulnour with 12 and Mouradian with 11.

Al Jala' led 10-7 at the beginning but took a good lead in three minutes relying on a press defence to outscore the Jordanian team 14-0 and take a 24-7 lead.

Playing together for the first time, Jordan's women seemed panicky causing many turnovers to keep Al Jala's lead 36-18.

Jordan's Salti cut the Syrian team's lead in the second half to 42-32, but Al Jala' again scored to lead 51-32. Salti then scored 11 consecutive points to reduce Al Jala's lead, but Jordan missed the efforts of Suhair Makusi who did not play most of the second half with a slight injury.

Al Jala' currently lead the standings in the Syrian League and will play a three-round playoff against titleholders Al Horrieh and Al Ourouba clubs starting July 19.

In a post match statement Al Jala's coach Nidal Farra told the Jordan Times he was happy with his team's performance: "We are just out



Jordan's Jumana Salti goes for a layup

of our league's matches and the team is very coherent, and ready unlike yours."

The four matches with Al Jala' are intended to put the finishing touches on the Kingdom's team's preparations for the upcoming Asian Basketball Championship which will be held in Shizuoka, Japan July 23-30.

Citing a cash-strapped budget, the JBF cancelled another four matches against a Ukrainian team.

Al Jala' have a 3-0 record over Jordanian teams. They beat Jordan's 1994 champions Al Jazireh twice in Aleppo early last year and again in July 94 when they finished second behind Lebanon's Homentmen in Al Jazireh's five-team regional championship.

Al Jala's lineup includes five players on the Syrian

national team including Al Yarmouk club's powerful centre Eto Mouradian. Other national team players include Karin and Miriam Abdulnour, Karla Maghamez, Dina Abdul Samad and Joel Abboushi. Other players are Reem Shakour, Nour Tarabishi, Tania Ribar, Aleen Khokaz, Regina Maqdesi and Wa'ed Karroum.

The Kingdom's team is coached by Fadi Sabbah and includes: Rana Hussein, Tala Maue, Jumana Salti, Hala Muheisen, Shuhair Makusi, Andeina Qassiesieh, Tetiana Qardan, Hind Ghouri, Sirsa Naghaway, Dima Shadeded, Zein Sha'sha, Rania Al Dajani, Jihan Abdulnour also joined the team on Monday after taking leave from her work in Beirut.

Schedule of matches

Thursday 6/7 Jala vs. Jordan Orthodox court 7:30 p.m.

Friday 7/7 Jala vs. Jordan Orthodox court 7:30 p.m.

<p>TODAY AT</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL:634144 PHILADELPHIA Sharon Stone, William Baldwin & Tom Berenger in Sliver Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL:699238 PLAZA Bruce Willis ... in Colour Of Night Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL:677420 CONCORD CONCORD "1" Singer: Alaa' Zalzali, Miss Lebanon: Nicole Brodwill...in Mission Golden Bird SHOWS: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD "2" PASSENGER 57 Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:30, 11</p>	<p>AMMOON THEATRE TEL:618274 - 618275 The play Hi Citizen will not be presented for five days pending changes in the play play for the youth Between two sidewalks Daily at 5:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Nabil Al Mashini Theatre TEL:675571 Today and Every Day Abu Al Khil and Najah...in KABARET The theatre closes on Monday performances start at 8:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Nabil & Hisham's TEL:625155 AHLAN THEATRE Shows will start July 3, 1995 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays shows will feature the play Arab Summit and Peace and on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays shows will feature the play (Ahlam Tabbe) Welcome Normalisation Shows start at 8:30 p.m. For reservation please call tel. 625155 Amman</p>
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Sports

Cipollini wins 2nd stage as Jalabert takes charge

VITRE, France (R) — French rider Laurent Jalabert sported a big smile and the leader's yellow jersey after the second stage of the Tour de France on Monday, one year to the day after a terrible accident left him with the blues.

A brilliant display of riding in the 235-kilometre Brittany stage from Perros-Guirec helped Jalabert take the race lead from compatriot Jacky Durand and obliterate the memory of his mishap in last year's tour.

On July 3 last year Jalabert, who had started the tour with great hopes of success, crashed with Belgian Wilfried Nelissen in a sprint finish in Armentières and was taken to hospital with blood pouring from head wounds.

"This is a great present for an anniversary," the delighted Frenchman said at the end of a stage won in a sprint finish by Italian speed ace Mario Cipollini.

The 3rd of July is a date I will remember all my life. I won't be able to forget it for two very different reasons — and I prefer this one to be quite frank.

"In the career of a rider, the yellow jersey is something very special and you have to do everything you can to get it."

Jalabert, the form rider of the season with a compelling series of victories including Paris-Nice, Milan-San Remo, the Criterium International and the Tour de Catalogne, certainly did everything within his power.

Seven seconds behind Durand at the start, he fished two seconds in a time bonus by placing third in the first intermediate sprint and won the second to gain a further six seconds, taking a theoretical one-second lead over the leader.

When the last sprint came, Belgian Eric Vanderaerden and Dutchman Frans Maassen had broken away but two seconds for third place were still up for grabs and Durand went for it, knowing he could grab back the advantage.

But Jalabert is in a state of grace these days and he chased his compatriot down, swept

past him with consummate ease and had time to look back as he sauntered nonchalantly over the intermediate line to extend his advantage by two more seconds.

Jalabert and his Spanish once team also featured strongly in a late break by a group of riders who finished 19 seconds ahead of the main peloton in which Durand was stranded.

Cipollini, the Italian playboy with long flowing blond locks and a pronounced preference for relaxing on the beach rather than training on a bike, was the fastest of the finishing bunch as he pulled off his 15th sprint win of the season — but curiously only his

Tour de France

second ever on the tour.

He beat off compatriot Giovanni Lombardi and the Uzbek dynamo Djamilidine Abdoujaparov to win in five hours 26 minutes 35 seconds.

Cipollini, unable to go for victory in a mass sprint finish to Sunday's first stage because he was suffering from a viral infection, joked about Monday's triumph: "If I can win when I've got a fever, what will I be like when I'm feeling better?"

Race favourites Miguel Indurain and Tony Rominger played their cards right and joined the late breakaway. Rominger is 11th overall, 29 seconds behind Jalabert, with Indurain 15th a further five seconds back.

But both may have some reason to worry about the on-form Jalabert, whose strong once team could well help him to increase his lead in the team trial third stage over 67 kilometres from Mayenne to Alencon.

Jalabert, once thought of as a sprint specialist, has widened his repertoire this season, is much more at ease in the climbs than before and will be difficult to dislodge now he has the yellow jersey.

"My form has always improved during the course of the season and for me in this tour it's just going to get better," he said.

Morceli breaks 2,000 metres world record

PARIS (AP) — Another year. Another world record for Noureddine Morceli.

It's getting to be a yearly habit for the Algerian.

He set the world record for 2,000 metres Monday at the Paris Gaz de France Grand Track meet with a time of 4 minutes, 47.88 seconds.

The old record was 4:50.81 by Said Aouita of Morocco in 1987, at the last major regular season meet in Paris.

"I know I had the world record in my legs," Morceli said. "Last week I did 3:32 for 1,500 in St. Petersburg (Russia) in very bad weather conditions."

Morceli now has the world records in the 1,500 (3:28.82 in 1992), mile (3:44.30 in 1993) and 3,000 (7:25.11 in 1994) in addition to the 2,000 this year.

He refused to single out any of them as his favourite.

"I respect them all. Only one person can be a world champion or record holder in any event, and it takes a lot of work to be one," Morceli said. "It is something not done in one or two years. It is the work over 10 to 15 years."

Morceli's brother Ali set the pace of 57.06 for the first 400 metres and led through the 800 in 1:57.06. American Terrence Herrington took over and helped Morceli to a 1,000 mark of 2:26.15.

"When I saw the 2:26 I thought it was a little bit slow," Morceli said. "So I decided to pick up the pace."

Morceli ran alone for the last 600 and passed the 1,500 in 3:36.89 and the mile in approximately 3:54. His last 400 was 55.0.

He fell to the ground after the finish line and was surrounded by Algerian fans waving national flags as he took his victory lap.

He didn't rule out more world records in the future, although he was taking a practical attitude.

"I am still young" the 25-year-old Morceli said. "I have a lot of time."

In a shorter race, Linford Christie beat Carl Lewis easily for the fourth consecutive time.

Christie was timed in 10.06 seconds. Davidson Ezinwa of Nigeria was second in 10.08 with world 200 champion Frankie Fredericks of Namibia third, 10.12.

Lewis was fifth in 10.25 behind another American, Jon Drummond, fourth in 10.25.

Christie's British teammate, world champion and recordholder Colin Jackson was just third in 13.28 in the 110 hurdles. American Mark Crear won in 13.08. Another American, Allen Jackson, was second in the same time.

Haile Gebreselassie of Ethiopia failed his attempt to recapture his 5,000 world record. He did 13 minutes, 7.81 seconds.

Moses Kiptaniui of Kenya did 12:55.30 last month to break the Ethiopian's mark of last year.

Sergei Bubka of Ukraine won the pole vault with 5.90 metres but world long jump recordholder Mike Powell lost his event.

Ivan Pedroso of Cuba and Powell both had 8.52-metre (27 feet 11½ inches) jump but the Cuban won with the better second jump of 8.37 (27-5½) compared to Powell's 8.30 (27-2¾).

Mike Johnson the 200-400 American champion, settled for a 200 win in 19.92.

In the 100, Lewis has a 12-5 edge over Christie but most were gained in the 1980s. Christie now has the Olympic and world titles that Lewis once held.

"I wasn't concerned with my time. I just ran to win," Christie said. "I thought it was okay but it is up to my coach to tell me if I did anything wrong later."

Lewis was disappointed with his race.

"I can do better," Lewis said. "I didn't do well out of the blocks. I just came over-seas and I will do better in my next races."



Noureddine Morceli of Algeria gives thanks for his victory

Lewis, now 34, has been slowly declining. He failed to qualify for the American team in the 100 by coming in sixth in the national trials. He has run a wind-aided 9.94 this

season, although coming in third in the Texas relays race. Olympic 400 champion Marie-Jose Percec of France had her first major battle in the 400 hurdles and beat two

top Americans, Tonja Buford and Kim Batten. Percec bettered her French record with 54.48 with Buford second in 54.67 and Batten third in 55.34.

Collymore breaks British transfer record

LIVERPOOL (AP) — Stan Collymore became the most expensive player in British soccer history Tuesday when he completed his \$2.8 million (\$12.8 million) paid by Manchester United for Newcastle's Andy Cole last season.

"Eight-and-a-half million is eight-and-a-half million but, at the end of the day, Liverpool bought me to play football on the pitch, not to run around saying 'I'm an 8.5-million-pound footballer,'" Collymore told a press conference at Anfield Stadium.

"I'm sure tabloid journalists will have a field day if I have a bad game, but I'm big enough and old enough to really go out and enjoy my football."

Collymore's rise has been truly meteoric since the late 1980s, when he played part-time for Stafford and supplemented his income by working in a supermarket.

Collymore joined the full-time ranks in December 1990 when Crystal Palace invested \$100,000 (\$160,000) in him, but his playing time was limited at Selhurst Park and he moved to lower-division club Southend during the 1992-93 season.

Collymore scored 15 goals in 30 games at Southend, enough for Forest manager Frank Clark to sign him for \$2.2 million (\$3.52 million) during the 1993 off-season.

Collymore responded with 50 goals — 25 in both his seasons in Nottingham — and earned a place on the England national team.

"Tuesday's record deal has one sticking point: Collymore is demanding a \$425,000 (\$680,000) slice of the transfer fee, something that Clark vetoed. The matter is expected to be resolved when Clark returns from vacation."

Liverpool manager Roy Evans sees Collymore as the player to spark the team's UEFA Cup campaign next season.

Tennis great Pancho Gonzales dies at 67

WIMBLEDON (AP) — Pancho Gonzales, one of the greatest and most colorful players in tennis history, died of cancer at age 67 in Las Vegas, Nev., his brother said Tuesday.

Ralph Gonzales told the Associated Press that his older brother died Monday night at Sunrise Hospital after stomach cancer had spread throughout his body.

"We had a terrific report from doctors three weeks ago," he said. "Everything seemed to be going so well. But a week ago Wednesday he became sick and he entered the hospital. He just deteriorated very quickly. The cancer showed up in his ribs and all over his body. At the end, he didn't suffer much."

A Los Angeles native, Gonzales won the U.S. national singles title in 1948 and 1949. He won eight professional singles titles from 1953 to 1961 and earned doubles titles at Wimbledon and the French Open in 1949.

In 1969, as a 41-year-old grandfather, Gonzales won the longest singles match in Wimbledon history, beating Charlie Pasarell in 112 games — 22-24, 1-6, 16-14, 6-3, 11-9. The match, suspended because of darkness, took five hours, 12 minutes and lasted two days.

"In the locker room, I helped Charlie get to the massage table," Gonzales recalled in a 1988 interview. Pasarell recalled Gonzales



Rawdat Al-Ma'aref Schools & College hosted the external examiners board from the Northern Consortium in Britain. It consisted of Mr. Brian Jeremiah, Dr. Alan Smith and Mr. David Murphy. The board monitored the procedures of the examination and verified the outstanding results with an overwhelming 100% success. All of the students have been accepted by the university of their choice and the subject of interest.

Nomo first Japanese chosen for All-Star Game

NEW YORK (AP) — Hideo Nomo became the first Japanese player chosen for Major League Baseball's All-Star Game as Baltimore's Cal Ripken led fan balloting to earn his 12th straight All-Star start.

Nomo, who has a 2.05 earned run average pitching his first season for the Los Angeles Dodgers, is among five first-time All-Stars on the National League staff, along with Pittsburgh's Denny Neagle, Montreal's Carlos Perez and Tyler Green and Heathcliff Slocumb of Philadelphia.

The announcement of All-Star line-ups came four days

after Nomo pitched his second straight shut-out, a 3-0 victory over the Colorado Rockies in which he struck-out 13. Nomo leads the NL in strikeouts with 109.

The NL starters elected by fans included Dodgers catcher Mike Piazza, Atlanta first baseman Fred McGriff, Houston second baseman Craig Biggio, San Francisco third baseman Matt Williams and St. Louis shortstop Ozzie Smith.

Both Williams and Smith are injured, so it will be up to NL manager Felipe Alou of Montreal to choose replacement starters.

San Francisco outfielder

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All Members of JSFA and their friends are invited to join us at the SCANDINAVIAN FOREST this Friday 7th July at 11:00 a.m.

We hope to see you.

GOREN BRIDGE

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH

Q1—Neither vulnerable, as South

you hold:

Q435 0885 0K1084 0A72

The bidding has proceeded:

North East South West

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

What do you bid now?

A.—Had East passed instead of making a takeout double you would have had to respond either two spades or one no trump, and our vote goes to the former. You should take the same action now, except that the rule to two spades now has the added advantage of its prescriptive value.

Q2—Neither vulnerable, as South

you hold:

Q473 0A1092 0Q36 0Q33

The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

What action do you take?

A.—If you think partner is bidding out of weakness, take another look at the auction. North did not raise

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

1NT 1NT 3♠ 3♠

What do you bid now?

A.—It is tempting to bid three no trump, but you have already promised a balanced minimum with a diamond stopper. We prefer a bid of three hearts to highlight the quality of your lone suit.

Q3—Both vulnerable, as South

you hold:

Q8 0A1084 01068 0A208

The bidding has proceeded:

North East South West

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

What action do you take?

A.—If you think partner is bidding out of weakness, take another look at the auction. North did not raise

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

1NT 1NT 3♠ 3♠

What do you bid now?

A.—You have already shown a minimum with your previous pass. The auction, however, has improved your hand because you have a fit for both of partner's suits. To do less than compete with three hearts shows distinct lack of faith in partner.

Q5—As South, vulnerable, you

hold:

Q42 0Q7 0AK84 0AQ108

The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

What action do you take?

A.—Since the opponents' auction has died at the two-level, you can expect partner to have reasonable values and certainly a singleton spade.

Q6—Neither vulnerable, as South

you hold:

Q10852 0KJ1084 0A87 06

The bidding has proceeded:

East South West North

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

What action do you take?

A.—Since the opponents' auction has died at the two-level, you can expect partner to have reasonable values and certainly a singleton spade.

Q7—Neither vulnerable, as South

you hold:

Q473 0A1092 0Q36 0Q33

The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

What action do you take?

A.—Since the opponents' auction has died at the two-level, you can expect partner to have reasonable values and certainly a singleton spade.

Q8—Neither vulnerable, as South

you hold:

Q473 0A1092 0Q36 0Q33

The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

What action do you take?

A.—Since the opponents' auction has died at the two-level, you can expect partner to have reasonable values and certainly a singleton spade.

Q9—Neither vulnerable, as South

you hold:

Q473 0A1092 0Q36 0Q33

The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

What action do you take?

A.—Since the opponents' auction has died at the two-level, you can expect partner to have reasonable values and certainly a singleton spade.

Q10—Neither vulnerable, as South

you hold:

Q473 0A1092 0Q36 0Q33

The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

What action do you take?

A.—Since the opponents' auction has died at the two-level, you can expect partner to have reasonable values and certainly a singleton spade.

Q11—Neither vulnerable, as South

you hold:

Q473 0A1092 0Q36 0Q33

The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

What action do you take?

A.—Since the opponents' auction has died at the two-level, you can expect partner to have reasonable values and certainly a singleton spade.

Q12—Neither vulnerable, as South

you hold:

Q473 0A1092 0Q36 0Q33

The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠

What action do you take?

